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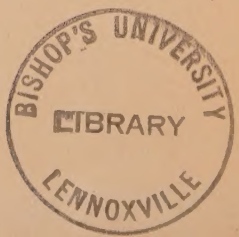

A Selection of the Letters of

HORACE WALPOLE

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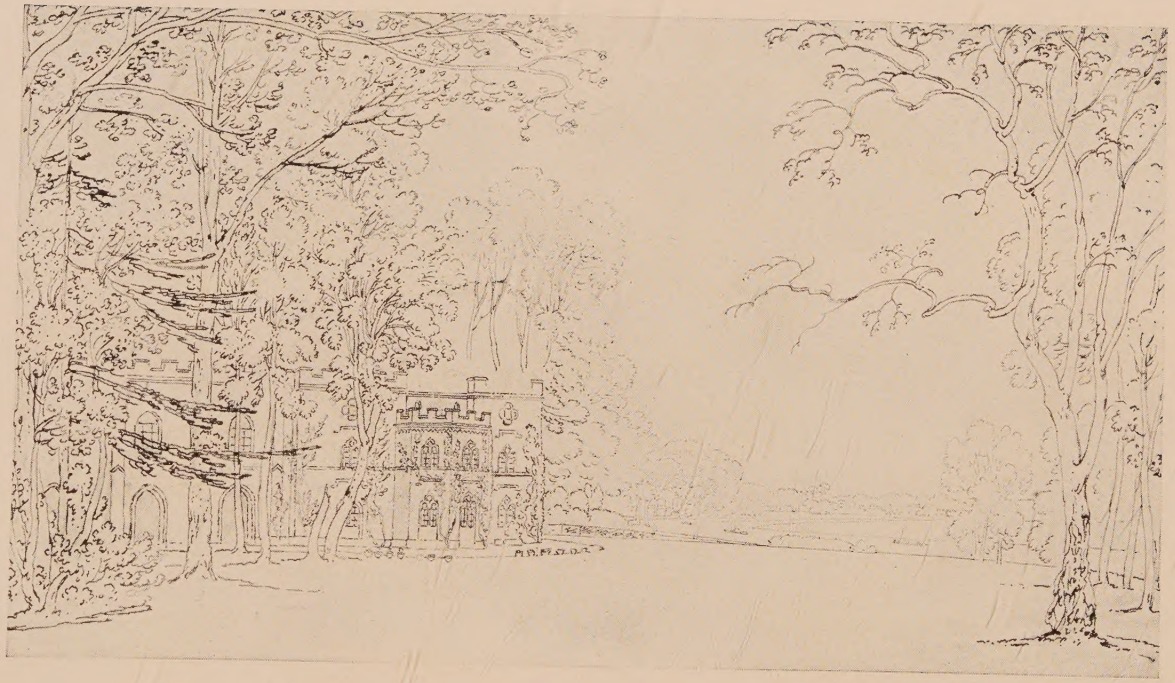

Strawberry Hill, by Farrington

A SELECTION OF THE LETTERS OF

HORACE WALPOLE

Edited by W. S. LEWIS

Fully Illustrated

Two Volumes
Volume Two

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A Selection of the Letters of
HORACE WALPOLE

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A Selection of the Letters of

HORACE WALPOLE

73. To Sir Horace Mann

[*Aetat 55*]

Strawberry Hill
July 13, 1773

I have delayed writing to you from day to day, my dear Sir, that I might be able at last to say something precisely to you about my poor nephew and myself, with regard to his affairs, chiefly for the information of his mother, who has not allured me to write to herself. Her son has had a terrible relapse, and for above a fortnight kept me under dreadful alarms by attempting to destroy himself. He is now quieter, and is settled at Hampstead in a house I have taken for him, and with which he is pleased. He was to have gone to a farm he has near Newmarket, but as I am much upon my guard, I asked whether there was water near it, and being answered yes, a mill-pond and wet ditches, I would not hear of it. Dr. Jebbe reckons this relapse favourable, as opposite to idiotism, into which he seemed sinking. It may be so, but idiotism would guarantee his life; and such relapses (after recovering from the immediate cause of his malady, the violent quack medicines) indicate

indicate strongly to me a radical cause. It is not for his mother's ear, but she knows that he may have inherited the seeds from her own family.

Mr. Sharpe, her lawyer, will give, I hope has given, her a circumstantial account of the bad posture of his affairs. He has promised me to tell her that, perplexing and almost desperate as they are, I have offered to undertake the management of them, and to endeavour by inspection, control, and economy to put them on a better foot. Mr. Sharpe has assured me this will be agreeable to her Ladyship; but I demand and insist on her giving me a positive confirmation of that request under her own hand, or I will immediately throw up the trust, which must be part of my warrant to Chancery, or no consideration shall prevent my relinquishing so difficult and intricate a charge, so fatiguing and troublesome to one of my shattered constitution, and to my love of ease. This, my good friend, for my sake, for the salvation of the family, for the only chance of unravelling the perplexity of affairs in which your own family is concerned, nay, for her own sake, as the whole burden or whole shame will fall on herself, you must persuade her to comply with immediately. The whole world will justify me in refusing if she refuses. My brother, Lord Walpole, and his next brother, have signed to me this request in form. The whole family is happy that I will sacrifice myself to this duty, and everybody approves my conduct. I will say to you that I have but too much reason to think that neither Lord Orford nor a distant view to my own interest call upon me, or even Sir Edward, who is nearer, to thrust ourselves into an invidious situation

situation. We have been told by one that ought to know that my Lord has disinherited us both—indeed, I have the less repugnance for that very reason. My behaviour can then be influenced only by duty. I was a very untractable nephew myself, but I will be a just uncle, though my uncle was not so.

I will trouble you with no more details, though my head and heart are full of them. They have jostled out every other idea, and I fear will occupy the rest of my life, for the vanity of restoring my family engrosses me. My father, excellent and wise as he was, ruined it by pushing this vanity too far. It will be mine to try to repair the havoc of three generations; and this I have had the confidence to call *duty*. But it would please my father, and the thought will be my reward; or I shall cease from this labour and all other thoughts in that small spot that puts an end to vainglory!

When my mind reposes a little, I smile at myself. I intended to trifle out the remnant of my days; and lo! they are invaded by lawyers, stewards, physicians, and jockeys! Yes; this whole week past I have been negotiating a sale of race-horses at Newmarket, and, to the honour of my transactions, the sale has turned out greatly. My Gothic ancestors are forgotten; I am got upon the turf. I give orders about game, dispark Houghton, have plans of farming, vend colts, fillies, bullocks, and sheep, and have not yet confounded terms, nor ordered pointers to be turned to grass. I read the part of the newspapers I used to skip, and peruse the lists of sweepstakes: not the articles of intelligence, nor the relations of the shows at Portsmouth for the King, or at Oxford for the Viceroy North

North.[1] I must leave Europe and its kings and queens to you; we do not talk of such folks at the Inns of Court. I sold Stoic[2] for five hundred guineas: I shall never get five pence by the monarchs of the empire, and therefore we jockeys of the Temple, and we lawyers of Newmarket, hold them to be very insignificant individuals. The only political point that touches me at present is what does occasion much noise and trouble,—the new Act that decries guineas under weight. Though I have refused to receive a guinea myself of Lord Orford's income, yet I must see it all paid into my Lady's banker's hands, and I am now in a fright lest the purchase-money of the racers should be made in light coin,—not from suspicion of such *honourable* men, but from their inattention to money. I must tell you a story apropos, which I had this morning from the person to whom it happened last summer. My deputy, Mr. Tullie, has an estate in Yorkshire, where clipping and *de*-coining is most practised. He was to pay an hundred guineas to a farmer there, and desired the man to stay till he could send for them to the nearest market town. The man was in haste, and as Mr. Tullie was just arrived from London, was sure he must have money in the house. With much persuasion he opened his bureau and took out an hundred new pieces, which he did not care to part with in that county where there were none but bad. The man started and refused to take them. 'Sir,' said he, 'there are so many coiners in these parts, that if I was seen to have so many new guineas, I should be

[1] Frederic, Lord North, Prime Minister, and Chancellor of Oxford.—WALPOLE.
[2] Name of a race-horse.—WALPOLE.

be sent to prison as one of the gang,' and he literally waited till an hundred bad guineas could be fetched from Gisborough. They say the bank is to issue five-pound notes: at present all trade is at a stop, and the confusion is extreme. Yea, verily, the villainy and iniquities of the age are bringing things rapidly to a crisis! Ireland is drained, and has not a shilling. The explosion of the Scotch banks has reduced them almost as low, and sunk their flourishing manufactures to low-water ebb. The Maccaronis are at their *ne plus ultra:* Charles Fox is already so like Julius Caesar that he owes an hundred thousand pounds. Lord Carlisle pays fifteen hundred, and Mr. Crewe twelve hundred a year for him—literally for him, being bound for him, while he, as like Brutus as Caesar, is indifferent about such paltry counters: one must talk of Clodius when one has no Scipio. Yet, if the merit of some historian does not interest posterity by the beauty of his narration, this age will be as little known as the annals of the Byzantine Empire, marked only by vices and follies. What is England now?—a sink of Indian wealth, filled in by nabobs and emptied by Maccaronis! A senate sold and despised! A country overrun by horse-races! A gaming, robbing, wrangling, railing nation, without principles, genius, character, or allies; the overgrown shadow of what it was! Lord bless me! I run on like a political barber. I must go back to my shop. I shall let farms well, if I attend to the state of the nation! What's Hecuba to me? Don't read the end of my letter to the Countess; she will think I am as mad as her son.

P. S. St. John Donatello comes down to-morrow to occupy his

his niche in my new chapel in the garden. With Houghton before my eyes, I am indulging myself in making this place delightful.

Monday, 19th

This letter was to have set out last Friday; but it was mislaid by an accident. I heard yesterday that the brother and sister-in-law of one[1] who gave you so much uneasiness near a year ago are going to Italy for some time: the first to Milan. You are at least safe from having them for guests, which you must not even offer. The moment you hear of their approach you had better write for specific directions. The person on whose account you was so ill-treated has no reason to alter his opinion on that transaction; except in being convinced that a want of sense was *not* the cause, which does not add to the opinion of the heart.

74. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[*Aetat* 55]

Strawberry Hill
Aug. 9, 1773

Here is a pause from my journeyings, Madam. I returned yesterday from Park Place and Nuneham, and hope for a letter before I go to Houghton on Thursday se'nnight.

Nuneham astonished me with the first *coup d'oeil* of its ugliness, and the next day charmed me. It is as rough as a bear, but capable of being made a most noble scene. There is a fine apartment

[1] The Duke of Gloucester; his brother and sister-in-law were the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.—T.

M. ANNAEI LUCANI
PHARSALIA

Cum Notis HUGONIS GROTII,

ET

RICHARDI BENTLEII.

Multa ſunt condonanda in opere poſtumo.
In Librum iv. Nota 641.

STRAWBERRY-HILL, Mdcclx.

The Strawberry Hill *Lucan*

apartment, some few very good pictures, the part of a temple acted by a church, and a flower-garden that would keep all Maccaronia in nosegays. The comfort was a little damped by the constant presence of Sir William Lee and Dame Elizabeth his wife, with a prim Miss, whose lips were stuffed into her nostrils. They sat both upright like macaws on their perches in a menagerie, and scarce said so much. I wanted to bid them *call a coach!* The morning and the evening was the first day, and the morning and the evening was the second day, and still they were just in their places! I made a discovery that was more amusing: Lady Nuneham is a poetess, and writes with great ease and sense, and some poetry, but is as afraid of the character as if it was a sin to make verses. You will be more entertained with what I heard of Lord Edgecumbe. Stay, I dare not tell it your ladyship—well, Lord Ossory must read this paragraph. Every scrap of Latin Lord Edgecumbe heard at the Encaenia at Oxford he translated ridiculously; one of the themes was *Ars Musica:* he Englished it Bumfiddle.

I wish you joy, Madam, of the sun's settling in England. Was ever such a southern day as this? My house is a bower of tuberoses, and all Twitnamshire is passing through my meadows to the races at Hampton Court. The picture is incredibly beautiful; but I must quit my joys for my sorrows. My poor Rosette is dying. She relapsed into her fits the last night of my stay at Nuneham, and has suffered exquisitely ever since. You may believe I have too; I have been out of bed twenty times every night, have had no sleep, and sat up with her till three this morning; but I am only making you laugh

laugh at me; I cannot help it—I think of nothing else. Without weaknesses I should not be I, and I may as well tell them as have them tell themselves.

P. S. I am going to make a postscript of a very old riddle, but if you never saw it you will like it, and revere the riddle-maker, which was, I am told, one Sir Isaac Newton, a great star-gazer and conjurer:—

> Four people sat down at a table to play;
> They play'd all that night, and some part of next day.
> This one thing observed, that when they were seated,
> Nobody played with them, and nobody betted;
> Yet when they got up, each was winner a guinea;
> Who tells me this riddle, I'm sure is no ninny.

75. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[*Aetat 55*]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 1, 1773

Your Ladyship was particularly kind in letting me meet so agreeable a letter at my return, which made me for some minutes forget the load of business and mortification that I have brought from Houghton, where I was detained four days longer than I intended. You would I fear repent your love of details, were I to enter on particulars of all I have seen and heard! far worse than my worst apprehensions!

You know, Madam, I do not want a sufficient stock of family pride, yet perhaps do not know, though I think it far from a beautiful place, how very fond I am of Houghton, as the object

object of my father's fondness. Judge then what I felt at finding it half a ruin, though the pictures, the glorious pictures, and furniture, are in general admirably well preserved. All the rest is destruction and desolation! The two great staircases exposed to all weathers, every room in the wings rotting with wet, the ceiling of the gallery in danger, the chancel of the church unroofed, the water-house built by Lord Pembroke tumbling down, the garden a common, the park half-covered with nettles and weeds, the walls and pales in ruin, perpetuities of livings at the very gates sold, the interest of Lynn gone, mortgages swallowing the estate, and a debt of above 40,000*l.* heaped on those of my father and brother. A crew of banditti were harboured in the house, stables, town and every adjacent tenement; and I had but too great reason to say that the out-pensioners have committed as great spoil—much even since my nephew's misfortune. The high-treasurer who paid this waste and shared it is a steward that can neither read nor write. This worthy prime minister I am forced to keep from particular circumstances—I mean if I continue in office myself; but though I have already done something, and have reduced an annual charge of near 1,200*l.* a year, the consequences of which I believe were as much more—I mean the waste made and occasioned by bad servants, dogs, and horses—still I very much doubt whether I must not resign, from causes not proper for a letter.

In the shock and vexation of such a scene was I forced to act as if my mind was not only perfectly at ease, but as if I, who never understood one useful thing in my days, was master of every

every country business, and qualified to be a surveyor-general. Though you would have pitied my sensations, you would have smiled, Madam, I am sure, at my occupations, which lasted without interruption from nine every morning till twelve at night, except that a few times I stole from the steward and lawyer I carried with me, to peep at a room full of painters, who you and Lord Ossory will like to hear, are making drawings from the whole collection, which Boydell is going to engrave. Well, the morning was spent in visiting the kennels, in giving away pointers, greyhounds, and foreign beasts, in writing down genealogies of horses—with all my heraldry I never thought to be the Anstis of Newmarket; in selling bullocks, sheep, Shetland horses, and all kind of stock; in hearing petitions and remonstrances of old servants, whom I pitied, though three were drunk by the time I had breakfasted; in listening to advice on raising leases, in ordering repairs, sending two teams to Lynn for tiles, in limiting expense of coals, candles, soap, brushes, &c., and in forty other such details.

About one or two, arrived farmers to haggle on leases, and though I did not understand one word in a score that they uttered, I was forced to keep them to dinner, and literally had three, four, and five to dine with me six days of the eight that I stayed there; nor was I quit so, for their business literally lasted most days till eight or nine at night. They are not laconic, nor I intelligent; and the stupidity and knavery of the steward did their utmost to perplex me and confound the map of the estate, every name in which he miscalled, as if he was interpreting to an Arabian ambassador. The three last hours

of

of the night were employed in reducing and recording the transactions of the day, in looking over accounts and methodizing debts, demands, and in drawing plans of future conduct. Oh, I am weary even with the recollection—is not your Ladyship with the recapitulation? For the first four days I was amazed at the quickness of my own parts, and almost lamented that such talents had lain so long unemployed. I improved two leases 150*l.*, and thought I had raised another more; and let a farm which my Lord kept in his own hands, and has received not a shilling from for seven years, for 500*l.* a year. Alas! I soon found I had been too obstinate or too sanguine, and absolutely had done nothing but blunder. My farmers broke off when I thought them ready to sign, and the second lease I found my Lord had been overreached in, and had engaged for 400*l.*, though I was offered 600*l.* by two different persons. I came away chagrined and humbled.

As King Phiz says in *The Rehearsal,* if I am turned off, nobody will take me; I am glad, therefore, your Ladyship did this time resist your propensity to praising me. I am glad to have done with my own chapter, and to come to your Ladyship's entertaining letter—I should not say entertaining, as you have been a month in apprehension of *you know not what.* I hope Lord Ossory will soon be without apprehension, and see *what* he wishes. Good Madam, do not scamper about like some ladies of antiquity, I forget their country, who thought fatigue went half-way in the procreation of a son and heir. I was not so much frightened at Mrs. Page's news; on the contrary

contrary, I was diverted, concluding the antiquated beauty was a lady famous for making ducal captives, and was going to be restored.

Lady Barrymore has, I think, two thousand a year, and I believe will not break her little heart, as you may see I thought by this stanza to the tune of *Green grow the rushes, oh!*

O, my Lady Barrymore,
O, my Lady Barrymore,
If I was you,
I'd bill and coo,
But I would never marry more.

I promise you I will not myself; nor do I think the lady in question will choose another skeleton.

You guessed right, Madam; *musicians* is the key to the riddle.[1] If it is too easy, which I am bound not to think, as I could not guess it, remember Sir Isaac was more famous for solving problems than for wrapping them in obscurity.

I must beg not to have my details mentioned to the Grace of Courts, nor to your jockeyhood. I doubt they would neither touch the one nor reform the other, though such a theme for moralizing. For my part, I sat down by the waters of Babylon, and wept over our Jerusalem—I might almost say, over my father's ashes, on whose gravestone the rain pours!

Adieu! Madam, the reading your letter over again made me cheerful. I shall want many such before the impression made by these last ten days will be obliterated.

Dear

[1] In the preceding letter.

76. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Aetat* 56]

Arlington Street
Nov. 27, 1773

Dear Sir,—Mr. Stonhewer[1] has sent me, and I have read, your first part of *Gray's Life*, which I was very sorry to part with so soon. Like everything of yours, I like it ten times better upon reading it again. You have with most singular art displayed the talents of my two departed friends[2] to the fullest advantage; and yet there is a simplicity in your manner, which, like the frame of a fine picture, seems a frame only, and yet is gold. I should say much more in praise, if, as I have told Mr. Stonhewer, I was not aware that I myself must be far more interested in the whole of the narrative than any other living mortal, and therefore may suppose it will please the world still more than it will——. And yet if wit, parts, learning, taste, sense, friendship, information, can strike or amuse mankind, must not this work have that effect,—and yet, though *me* it may affect far more strongly, self-loving certainly has no share in my affection to many parts. Of my two friends and me, I only make a most indifferent figure. I do not mean with regard to parts or talents—I never one instant of my life had the superlative vanity of ranking myself with them. They not only possessed genius, which I have not, great learning which is to be acquired, and which I never acquired

[1] The intimate friend of Gray through whose influence with the Duke of Grafton Gray was made Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.
[2] Gray and West.—T.

quired; but both Gray and West had abilities marvellously premature. What wretched boyish stuff would my contemporary letters to them appear, if they existed; and which they both were so good-natured as to destroy. What unpoetic things were mine at that age, some of which unfortunately do exist, and which I yet could never surpass; but it is not in that light I consider my own position. We had not got to Calais before Gray was dissatisfied, for I was a boy, and he, though infinitely more a man, was not enough so to make allowances. Hence I am never mentioned once with kindness in his letters to West. This hurts me for him, as well as myself. For the oblique censures on my want of curiosity, I have nothing to say. The fact was true; my eyes were not purely classic; and though I am now a dull antiquary, my age then made me taste pleasures and diversions merely modern: I say this to you, and to you only, in confidence. I do not object to a syllable. I know how trifling, how useless, how blamable I have been, and submit to hear my faults, both because I have had faults, and because I hope I have corrected some of them; and though Gray hints at my unwillingness to be told them, I can say truly that to the end of his life he neither spared the reprimand nor mollified the terms, as you and others know, and I believe have felt.

These reflections naturally arose on reading his letters again, and arose in spite of the pleasure they gave me, for self will intrude, even where self is not so much concerned. I am sorry to find I disobliged Gray so very early. I am sorry for him that it so totally obliterated all my friendship for him; a remark

mark the world probably, and I hope, will not make, but which it is natural for me, dear Sir, to say to you. I am so sincerely zealous that all possible honour should be done to my two friends, that I care not a straw for serving as a foil to them. And as confession of faults is the only amendment I can now make to the one disobliged, I am pleased with myself for having consented, and for consenting, as I do, to that public reparation. I thank you for having revived West and his alas! stifled genius, and for having extended Gray's reputation. If the world admires them both as much as they deserved, I shall enjoy their fame; if it does not, I shall comfort myself for standing so prodigiously below them, as I do even without comparison.

There are a few false printings I could have corrected, but of no consequence, as 'Grotto del Cane,' for 'Grotta,' and a few notes I could have added, but also of little consequence. Dodsley, who is printing Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*, will hate you for this publication. I was asked to write a Preface—*Sic notus Ulysses?* I knew Ulysses too well. Besides, I have enough to burn without adding to the mass. Forgive me, if I differ with you, but I cannot think Gray's Latin poems inferior even to his English, at least as I am not a Roman. I wish too that in a note you had referred to West's Ode on the Queen [1] in Dodsley's *Miscellanies*. *Adieu!* go on and prosper. My poor friends have an historian worthy of them, and who satisfies their and your friend

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S.

[1] Caroline of Anspach.—T.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter, which is not to go till to-morrow, I have received your letter, and most delightful lines: you are sure I think them so, and should if they were not yours. The subject prejudices me enough, without my affection for your writings. I cannot recollect now (for I lose my memory by having it over-stuffed with business) who told me the story of the blasphemy,[1] and I will never affirm to you anything where I cannot quote my evidence. Perhaps I shall remember; the story however ought not to be lost, and may be reserved for even a twentieth edition; no, I don't know whether there will be a twentieth. If what you tell me of a message be true, there will not be one. I had not heard it, but can easily believe it, and I could tell you exactly what it would cost, and will by word of mouth, if I ever see you again: for though I shall get some courtier to direct this, that it may pass safe, I cannot name my authority in writing. The fact is a secret yet, but will not be so long.

I will send for the *Life* again to Mr. Stonhewer, since the impression is not perfect, and will add two or three corrections and perhaps a note or two, which you may reject if you please. I do not recollect the notes on *Education*,[2] but will look for them, if I can get to Strawberry Hill next week, but I am demolished both in health and spirits by my poor nephew's affairs. I have neither strength nor understanding to go through them. I sometimes think of throwing them up and going

[1] The Earl of Bristol said that he would as soon read blasphemy as the *Heroic Epistle*.—T.

[2] Notes on part of Gray's unfinished poem on the *Alliance of Education and Government*, for which Mason had asked.—T.

Wm. Hudson pinx.
Chas. Spooner fe.
David Garrick Esq.r
Printed for Rob.t Sayer, at the Golden Buck in Fleet Street.

GARRICK

going to lay my bones in some free land, while there is such a country. This does not deserve to be so, but *Qui vult tyrannizari tyrannizetur!*

I did not know the Preface to the new Shakespeare was Garrick's, which I suppose is what you mean. He is as fit to write it, as a country curate to compose an excellent sermon from having preached one of Tillotson's. I will send you the volume, and you will return it when you have done with it.

I don't know when the young lady's head will be broken, they say next week. If her heart is not tough and Dutch, that may be broken too.

Saturday

I cannot possibly recollect who told me the story above, but I am certain it was related as an undoubted fact, nor does it sound at all like invention.

77. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[*Aetat* 56]

Arlington Street
Nov. 28, 1773

Don't commend me yet, my dear Sir; I will be a good man before I die, if it is possible; but at present I am only learning virtues at the expense of all the world. For some time I had wrapped myself up in my indifference and integrity; and hoped the former, like cedar-chips, would preserve the latter, as it lay useless by me in my drawer. The swarms of rogues that my nephew's affairs have let loose upon me oblige me to produce all my little stock of honesty; and all the service I intend to

to do myself by my endless fatigue, shall be to make myself better. The possession of one vice, pride, and the want of two more, ambition and self-interest, have preserved me from many faults; but into how many more have I fallen! The fruit is past; but the soil shall be improved. I do not talk with a lawyer, that, at the same time, I am not looking into him as a glass, and setting my mind into a handsomer attitude. When he gives me advice, I often say, silently, 'This I will be sure *not* to follow; for, if many try to cheat me, some are as zealous to make me defraud *for* my family; which, though more likely to tempt me than if it was for myself, shall not make me swerve from that narrow middle path, that does exist, but is seldom perceptible, especially as we rarely look for it but through spectacles that we take care should not magnify.'

Oh, my dear Sir, we are wretched and contemptible creatures! Have I not been writing a panegyric here, when I meant a satire on myself, and did not dare to finish it? I am not mercenary, and therefore lash those that are. I pick out a single negative quality, which I happen to be born without, and think that, like charity, it is to cover a multitude of sins! I am a Pharisee, and affect the modest humility of the publican! Well! I give up all pretensions; but I will try to have some positive merit. I never thought of it while I was idle—my life is now a scene of incessant business. I shall never learn my business; but, thank God! virtue is not so intricate as law and farming. My honesty shall not be a sinecure like my places. I will learn economy for my nephew's estate, though I never had it for the care of my own fortune. My pride,—

no

no, pray let me keep that: if I expel it, seven worse devils will enter in; and I should sell another passion, a very predominant one, the love of liberty. While all the world is selling the thing, pray let me, if but as a *virtuoso*, preserve the affection, which is already a curiosity, and will soon, I believe, be an unique.

Luckily for you, I have not time to talk any longer about myself, which you see one loves to do, even though it be to rail at oneself: indeed, like Montaigne, one contrives to specify no failings without giving them a foil that makes them look like virtues. For my part, I forswear any good qualities; I am mortified at knowing I have none; or, if I have had, and Virtue fathered them, Pride was their mother, and, whoever she laid them to, Hypocrisy was her gallant. Still, if she be not past child-bearing, her husband shall yet have some lawful issue.

You receive my letters very late, unless it may happen that you do not answer soon, for yesterday, November 27, I received yours of the 9th, which mentions getting mine of the 4th. At first I was rejoiced, and did not consider that mine of November 4 could not possibly have reached you, as I wish most earnestly to hear it has—but alas! it was mine of October 4, and what is worse, I find Lady O. is gone to Naples, which will be an excuse for her not answering mine to her this age; though it is of so much consequence that she should determine immediately; and it is still much more unfortunate that you are not where she is, to hasten her decision. Her delay may ruin all

all, and I hope you have at least wrote to press her, or *the object* I wish to preserve may be gone, as I am told it will be —I hope you understand me. I fear she will be so cunning as to deceive herself, in order to show her cunning. Her son grows worse, for he is more furious and mischievous, and for longer seasons. I will not enter on the theme again now, but I am half-dead with the fatigue, anxiety, difficulty, and unrelaxing trouble this misfortune has brought upon me! It will destroy any talents I have, and already affects my memory, by the multiplicity of new names and new matter with which I am forced to stuff my head, and which crowd out every other idea.

News there is none; and if there were, have I time to hear or remember it? There are scarce three themes. The great one is the Irish absentee tax, which the ministers first espoused, then tried to avoid, and is now likely to be saddled on them by mismanagement at Dublin. They have got too great a majority there, who will carry it for them in spite of England's and Ireland's teeth too.

Lord Holland is dying, is paying Charles Fox's debts, or most of them, for they amount to one hundred and thirty thousand pounds! ay, ay; and has got a grandson and heir. I thought this child a Messiah, who came to foretell the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews;* but while there is a broker or a gamester upon the face of the earth, Charles will not be out of debt. Pray, do your crews of English at Florence emulate their countrymen? I saw a letter the other day from Aix, which

which said a young Englishman there had lost twenty-two thousand pounds at one sitting. Madness and perdition are gone forth! Is it possible that we should not be undone?

I can tell you of two English above the common standard coming to you. The great Indian Verres, or Alexander, if you please, Lord Clive, is one: the other, Lady Mary Coke. She was much a friend of mine, but a late marriage,[1] which *she* particularly disapproved, having flattered herself with the hopes of one just a step higher,[2] has a little cooled our friendship. In short, though she is so greatly born, she has a frenzy for royalty, and will fall in love with, and at the feet of, the Great Duke and Duchess, especially the former,[3] for next to being an Empress herself, she adores the Empress-Queen, or did—for perhaps that passion, not being quite reciprocal, may have waned. However, bating every English person's madness, for every English person must have their madness, Lady Mary has a thousand virtues and good qualities. She is noble, generous, high-spirited, undauntable; is most friendly, sincere, affectionate, and above any mean action. She loves attention, and I wish you to pay it, even for my sake, for I would do anything to serve her. I have often tried to laugh her out of her weakness; but, as she is very serious, she was so in that, and if all the sovereigns in Europe combined to slight her, she still would put her trust in the next generation of princes. Her heart is excellent, and deserves and would become a crown, and that

[1] Of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Waldegrave.—WALPOLE.
[2] She had flattered herself that Edward, Duke of York, elder brother of the Duke of Gloucester, would marry her.—WALPOLE.
[3] The Grand Duke was the son of the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa.—T.

that is the best of all excuses for desiring one. I am glad you will have so little trouble with those that are nearer.[1]

Thank you a thousand times for your anecdotes of the Jesuits. It is comfortable to see the world ever open its eyes. If it had all Argus's, it would have need to stare with every pair; but I think it was said of them, that some watched while others slept. Just so would the world's, and would say with the sluggard in the Psalms, 'A little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the arms to sleep.' The Jesuits have many collaterals, besides other monks. Adieu!

P. S. We have just heard that the tax on Irish absentees has been thrown out even at Dublin.

78. To the Rev. William Cole

[*Aetat* 56]

Strawberry Hill
May 28, 1774

Nothing will be more agreeable to me, dear Sir, than a visit from you in July. I will try and persuade Mr. Granger to meet you; and if you had any such thing as summer in the fens, I would desire you to bring a bag with you. We are almost freezing here in the midst of beautiful verdure, with a profusion of blossoms and flowers: but I keep good fires, and seem to feel warm weather while I look through the window, for the way to ensure summer in England is to have it framed and glazed in a comfortable room.

I shall be still more glad to hear you are settled in your living

[1] The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in Italy.—WALPOLE.

and that She died in 1612, two years before the publication of Sir Walter Raleigh's hiſtory, She will then have been no leſs than * one hundred and forty five years of age, a particularity ſingular enough to excite, and I hope, to excuſe this Inquiry.

* *Lord Bacon, ſays Fuller, computed her age to be one hundred and forty at leaſt; and added, that She three times had a new ſet of teeth; for ſo I underſtand,* ter vices dentiſſe, *not that She recovered them three times after caſting them, as Fuller tranſlates it, which is giving her four ſets of teeth.*

Worthies in Northumb. p. 310.

Being at Strawberry Hill in Apr: 1773, I ſaw there a Copy of the Picture, commonly attributed to the old Counteſs of Desmond: but Mr. Walpole told me, that there is ſufficient Proof that it is a Painter's Mother: I think ~~Hollar's~~ Hamilton's. However, by a Lr. from INSCRIP-
Mr. Lort Apr: 15. 1774, he aſſures me, that on Mr. Pennant's calling at Strawberry Hill to ſee this Picture he was much chagrined at having a Print of it engraved for his Book, till Mr. Lort relieved him by carrying him to a Garret in Devonſhire House, where was a Picture of this ſame Counteſs, with her Name on it, exactly corresponding to his engraved Print. I remember a tolerable good old Picture of her at Mr. Dicey's Bookſeller at Briſtol, at Walton in Bucks.

living. Burnham[1] is almost in my neighbourhood, and its being in that of Eton and Windsor will more than console you, I hope, for leaving Ely and Cambridge. Pray let me know the moment you are certain. It would now be a disappointment to me as well as you. You shall be inaugurated in my chapel, which is much more venerable than your parish church, and has the genuine air of antiquity. I bought very little at poor Mr. Bateman's. His nephew disposed of little that was worth house-room, and yet pulled the whole to pieces.

Mr. Pennant[2] has published a new tour to Scotland and the Hebrides, and, though he has endeavoured to paint their dismal isles and rocks in glowing colours, they will not be satisfied, for he seems no bigot about Ossian, at least in some passages, and is free in others, which their intolerating spirit will resent. I cannot say the book is very entertaining to me, as it is more a book of rates than of antiquities. The most amusing part was communicated to him by Mr. Banks, who found whole islands that bear nothing but columns, as other places do grass and barley. There is a beautiful cave called Fingal's, which proves that nature loves Gothic architecture.

Mr. Pennant has given a new edition of his former tour with more cuts. Among others is the vulgar head called the Countess of Desmond. I told him I had discovered, and proved past contradiction, that it is Rembrandt's mother; he owned it, and said he would correct it by a note—but he has not. This is a brave

[1] Cole succeeded his half-brother, Dr. Apthorpe, as vicar of Burnham in Buckinghamshire in June, 1774.—T.

[2] Thomas Pennant (1726-1798). He visited Scotland in 1769 and 1772, and published accounts of both tours.—T.

brave way of being an antiquary; as if there could be any merit in giving for genuine what one knows is spurious. He is, indeed, a superficial man, and knows little of history or antiquity—but he has a violent rage for being an author. He set out with ornithology, and a little natural history, and picks up his knowledge as he rides. I have a still lower idea of Mr. Gough; for Mr. Pennant, at least, is very civil. The other is a hog. Mr. Fenn, another smatterer in antiquity, but a very good sort of man, told me Mr. Gough desired to be introduced to me—but as he has been such a bear to you, he shall not come. The Society of Antiquaries put me in mind of what the old Lord Pembroke said to Anstis the herald: 'Thou silly fellow, thou dost not know thy own silly business.' If they went beyond taste by poking into barbarous ages when there was no taste, one could forgive them—but they catch at the first ugly thing they see, and take it for old, because it is new to them, and then usher it pompously into the world as if they had made a discovery, though they have not yet cleared up a single point that is of the least importance, or that tends to settle any obscure passage in history.

I will not condole with you on having had the gout, since you find it has removed other complaints. Besides, as it begins late, you are never likely to have it severely. I shall be in terrors in two or three months, having had the four last fits periodically and biennially. Indeed, the two last were so long and severe, that my remaining and shattered strength could ill support such.

I must repeat how glad I shall be to have you at Burnham. When

When people grow old, as you and I do, they should get together. Others do not care for us, but we seem wiser to one another by finding fault with them—not that I am apt to dislike young folks, whom I think everything becomes; but it is a kind of self-defence to live in a body. I dare to say that monks never find out that they grow old fools. Their age gives them authority, and nobody contradicts them. In the world, one cannot help perceiving one is out of fashion. Women play at cards with women of their own standing, and censure others between the deals, and thence conclude themselves Gamaliels. I, who see many young men with better parts than myself, submit with a good grace, or retreat hither to my castle, where I am satisfied with what I have done, and am always in good humour; but I like to have one or two old friends with me—I do not much invite the juvenile, who think my castle and me of equal antiquity, for no wonder, if they suppose that George I lived in the time of the Crusades. Adieu! my good Sir, and pray let Burnham Wood and Dunsinane be good neighbours.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

79. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[*Aetat* 56]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 14,. 1774

Madam,—'Methinks an Aesop's fable you relate,' as Dryden says in *The Hind and Panther*. A mouse that wraps itself in

in a French cloak and sleeps on a couch; and a goldfinch that taps at the window and swears it will come in to quadrille at eleven o'clock at night! no, no, these are none of Aesop's cattle; they are too fashionable to have lived so near the Creation. The mouse is neither country mouse nor city mouse; and whatever else he may be, the goldfinch must be a Maccaroni, or at least of the *Sçavoir vivre*.[1] I do not deny but I have some skill in expounding types and portents; and could give a shrewd guess at the identical persons who have travestied themselves into a quadruped and biped; but the truth is, I have no mind, Madam, to be Prime Minister. King Pharaoh is mighty apt on emergencies to send for us soothsayers, and put the whole kingdom into our hands, if his butler or baker, with whom he is wont to gossip, does but tell him of a cunning man.

I have no ambition to supplant Lord North—especially as the season approaches when I dread the gout; and I should be very sorry to be fetched out of my bed to pacify America. To be sure, Madam, you give me a fair field for uttering oracles: however, all I will unfold is, that the emblematic animals have no views on Lady Louisa. The omens of her fortune are in herself; and I will burn my books, if beauty, sense, and merit do not bestow all the happiness on her they prognosticate.

I can as little agree to the Duchess of M.'s solution of the Duchess of L.'s marriage, which, by the way, is at least not over yet. Nor do I believe, *whatever mamma knows*, that she will agree to it either; and, for this reason, the efficacy of pregnancy

[1] A fashionable club.—T.

pregnancy on a delicate constitution is no lasting nostrum. A husband would be but a temporary preservative, and useless, when the operations of the remedy could not possibly be of any service. Alas! is a poor sick lady to leave off the drug when it can no longer produce the wholesome tumour on the patient!

I doubt the Duchess of M. did not advert to the vicinity of that hopeless season in the Duchess of L., or I think her Grace would not have laid down a position from which such disagreeable consequences might be drawn.

I like the blue eyes, Madam, better than the denomination of Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, which, all respectable as it is, is very harsh and rough sounding; pray let her change it with the first goldfinch that offers. Nay, I do not even trust to the blueth of the eyes. I do not believe they last once in twenty times. One cannot go into any village fifty miles from London without seeing a dozen little children with flaxen hair and eyes of sky-blue. What becomes of them all? One does not see a grown Christian with them twice in a century, except in poetry.

The Strawberry Gazette is very barren of news. Mr. Garrick has the gout, which is of more consequence to the metropolis than to Twitnamshire. Lady Hertford dined here last Saturday, brought her loo party, and stayed supper; there were Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Howe, and the Colonels Maude and Keene. This was very heroic, for one is robbed every hundred yards. Lady Hertford herself was attacked last Wednesday on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon, but

but she had two servants on horseback, who would not let her be robbed, and the highwayman decamped.

The greatest event I know was a present I received last Sunday, just as I was going to dine at Lady Blandford's, to whom I sacrificed it. It was a bunch of grapes as big—as big—as that the two spies carried on a pole to Joshua; for spies in those days, when they robbed a vineyard, were not at all afraid of being overtaken. In good truth this bunch weighed three pounds and a half, *côte rôtie* measure; and was sent to me by my neighbour Prado, of the tribe of Issachar, who is descended from one of aforesaid spies, but a good deal richer than his ancestor. Well, Madam, I carried it to the Marchioness, but gave it to the *maître d'hôtel*, with injunctions to conceal it till the dessert. At the end of dinner, Lady Blandford said she had heard of three immense bunches of grapes at Mr. Prado's at a dinner he had made for Mr. Ellis. I said those things were always exaggerated. She cried, Oh! but Mrs. Ellis told it, and it weighed I don't know how many pounds, and the Duke of Argyle had been to see the hothouse, and she wondered, as it was so near, I would not go and see it. 'Not I, indeed,' said I; 'I dare to say there is no curiosity in it.' Just then entered the gigantic bunch. Everybody screamed. 'There,' said I, 'I will be shot if Mr. Prado has such a bunch as yours.' In short she suspected Lady Egremont, and the adventure succeeded to admiration. If you will send the Bedfordshire waggon, Madam, I will beg a dozen grapes for you.

Mr. Barker may pretend what he will, but if he liked Strawberry Hill so well, he would have visited it again, and by daylight

daylight. He could see no more of it at nine o'clock at night than he does at this moment.

Pray, Madam, is not it Farming Woods'[1] tide? Who is to have the care of the dear mouse in your absence? I wish I could spare Margaret, who loves all creatures so well that she would have been happy in the ark, and sorry when the Deluge ceased; unless people had come to see Noah's old house, which she would have liked still better than cramming his menagerie.

Postscript, *entre nous*. Have you heard that certain verses have been read inadvertently to the D. of Gr.?[2] I long to know, but cannot learn who was the ingenious person.

80. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Aetat* 56]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 16, 1774

What is the commonest thing in the world?—Lord! how can you be so dull as not to guess? why to be sure, to hunt for a thing forty times, and give it over, and then find it when you did not look for it, exactly where you had hunted forty times. This happened to me this very morning, and overjoyed I am. I suppose you don't guess what I have found? Really, Mr. Mason, you great poets are so absent, and so unlike the rest of the world! Why what should I have found, but the thing in the world that was most worth finding? a hidden treasure—a hidden fig; no, Sir, not the certificate of the Duchess of Kingston's first marriage, nor the lost books of Livy

[1] Lord Ossory's seat in Northamptonshire.—T.
[2] The Duke of Grafton, Lady Ossory's former husband.—T.

Livy, nor the longitude, nor the philosopher's stone, nor all Charles Fox has lost. I tell you it is what I have searched for a thousand times, and had rather have found than the longitude, if it was a thousand times longer. Oh, you do guess, do you? I thought I never lost anything in my life. I was sure I had them, and so I had; and now am I not a good soul, to sit down and send you a copy incontinently? Don't be too much obliged to me neither. I am in a panic till there are more copies than mine, and as the post does not go till to-morrow, I am in terror lest the house should be burnt to-night. I have a mind to go and bury a transcript in the field; but then if I should be burnt too! nobody would know where to look for it. Well, here it is! I think your decorum will not hold it proper to be printed in the *Life*, nor would I have it. We will preserve copies, and the devil is in it, if some time or other it don't find its way to the press. My copy is in his own handwriting; but who could doubt it: I know but one man upon earth who could have written it but Gray.[1]

81. To John Craufurd[2]

[*Aetat* 56]
Strawberry Hill
Sept. 26, 1774

You tell me to write to you, and I am certainly disposed to do anything I can to amuse you; but that is not so easy a matter, for two very good reasons: you are not the most amusable

[1] The original letter ends with a copy of Gray's verses, *Jemmy Twitcher: or, the Cambridge Courtship*, and a suggestion that the coarseness of the last two lines should be modified.—T.

[2] John Craufurd (d. 1814.). He was well known in French and English society, and was a friend and correspondent of Madame du Deffand.—T.

amusable of men, and I have nothing to amuse you with, for you are like electricity, you attract and repel at once; and though you have at first a mind to know anything, you are tired of it before it can be told. I don't go to Almack's nor amongst your acquaintance. Would you bear to hear of mine? of Lady Blandford, Lady Anne Conolly, and the Duchess of Newcastle? for by age and situation I live at this time of year with nothing but old women. They do very well for me who have little choice left, and who rather prefer common nonsense to wise nonsense—the only difference I know between old women and old men. I am out of all politics, and never think of elections, which I think I should hate even if I loved politics; just as if I loved tapestry I do not think I could talk over the manufacture of worsteds. Books I have almost done with too; at least, read only such as nobody else would read. In short, my way of life is too insipid to entertain anybody but myself, and though I am always employed, I must say I think I have given up everything in the world only to be at liberty to be very busy about the most arrant trifles.

Well! I have made out half a letter with a history very like the journal in the *Spectator*, of the man, the chief incidents of whose life were stroking his cat, and walking to Hampstead. Last night, indeed, I had an adventure that would make a great figure in such a narrative. *You* may be enjoying bright suns and serene horizons under the Pole, but in this dismal southern region it has rained for this month without interruption. Lady Browne and I dined as usually on Sundays with Lady Blandford. Our gentle Thames was swelled in the morning

morning to a very respectable magnitude, and we had thought of returning by Kew Bridge; however, I persuaded her to try if we could not ferry, and when we came to the foot of the hill, the bargemen told us the water was sunk. We embarked and had four men to push the ferry. The night was very dark, for though the moon was up, we could neither see her, nor she us. The bargemen were drunk, the poles would scarce reach the bottom, and in five minutes the rapidity of the current turned the barge round, and in an instant we were at Isleworth. The drunkest of the men cried out, 'She is gone, she is lost!' meaning they had lost the management. Lady Browne fell into an agony, began screaming and praying to Jesus, and every land and water god and goddess, and I, who expected not to stop till we should run against Kew Bridge, was contriving how I should get home; or what was worse, whether I must not step into some mud up to my middle, be wet through, and get the gout. With much ado they recovered the barge and turned it; but then we ran against the piles of the new bridge, which startled the horses, who began kicking. My Phillis's terrors increased, and I thought every minute she would have begun confession. Thank you, you need not be uneasy; in ten minutes we landed very safely, and if we had been drowned, I am too exact not to have dated my letter from the bottom of the Thames. There! there's a letter; I think you would not want to read such another, even if written to somebody else.

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S.

P. S. Pontdeyvelde is dead, and our friend [1] fancies she is more sorry than she fancied she would be: but it will make a vacuum in her room rather than in her entertainment.

Arlington Street
Sept. 29

This letter, which should have gone two days ago, but I had no direction, will come untimely, for you will be up to the ears in your canvass,[2] as the Parliament is to be dissolved the day after to-morrow.

82. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway and the Countess of Ailesbury*

[*Aetat* 57]

Arlington Street
Jan. 15, 1775

You have made me very happy by saying your journey to Naples is laid aside. Perhaps it made too great an impression on me; but you must reflect, that all my life I have satisfied myself with your being perfect, instead of trying to be so myself. I don't ask you to return, though I wish it: in truth, there is nothing to invite you. I don't want you to come and breathe fire and sword against the Bostonians, like that second Duke of Alva, the inflexible Lord George Germain; or to anathematize the court and all its works, like the incorruptible Burke, who scorns lucre, except when he can buy a hundred thousand acres from naked Caribs for a song. I don't want you

[1] Madame du Deffand.
[2] Craufurd was elected for Renfrewshire on Oct. 24, 1774.

you to do anything like a party-man. I trust you think of every party as I do, with contempt, from Lord Chatham's mustard-bowl down to Lord Rockingham's hartshorn. All, perhaps, will be tried in their turns, and yet, if they had genius, might not be mighty enough to save us. From some ruin or other I think nobody can, and what signifies an option of mischiefs?

An account is come of the Bostonians having voted an army of sixteen thousand men, who are to be called *minute-men*, as they are to be ready at a minute's warning. Two directors or commissioners, I don't know what they are called, are appointed. There has been too a kind of mutiny in the Fifth Regiment. A soldier was found drunk on his post. Gage, in this time of *danger*, thought rigour necessary, and sent the fellow to a court-martial. They ordered two hundred lashes. The General ordered them to improve their sentence. Next day it was published in the *Boston Gazette*. He called them before him, and required them on oath to abjure the communication: three officers refused. Poor Gage is to be scapegoat,[1] not for this, but for what was a reason against employing him, incapacity. I wonder at the precedent! Howe[2] is talked of for his successor.—Well, I have done with *you!*—Now I shall gossip with Lady Ailesbury.

You must know, Madam, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new christened

[1] Gage was not deprived of command on this occasion.—T.
[2] Major-General Hon. William Howe; he was sent out with reinforcements for Gage in March, 1775.—T.

THE FRONTISPIECE TO THE FIRST VOLUME OF MRS. (AFTERWARD LADY) MILLER'S *Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath*

christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a Madam Riggs, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit; her daughter, who passed for nothing, married to a Captain Miller, full of good-natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of Miss Rich, who carried me to dine with them at Bath-Easton, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scudéri, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey. The Captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this is fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers! The collection is printed, published.—Yes, on my faith! There are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, made by her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland; receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, *alias* George Pitt; others very pretty, by Lord Palmerston; some by Lord Carlisle; many by Mrs. Miller herself

herself, that have no fault but wanting metre; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there never was anything so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.[1]

83. To Robert Jephson[2]

[*Aetat* 57]

February 1775

You have drawn more trouble on yourself, Sir, than you expected; and would probably excuse my not performing the rest of my promise: but though I look upon myself as engaged to send you my thoughts, you are neither bound to answer them, nor regard them. They very likely are not new, and it is presumption in me to send hints to a much abler writer than myself. I can only plead in apology, that I interest myself in your fame; and as you are the only man capable of restoring and improving our stage, I really mean no more than to exhort and lead you on to make use of your great talents.

I have told you, as is true, that I am no poet. It is as true that you are a genuine one; and therefore I shall not say one word on that head. For the construction of a drama—it is mechanic, though much depends on it. A by-stander may be a good director at least; for mechanism certainly is independent of, though easily possessed by, a genius. Banks never wrote six

[1] The rest of this letter is omitted.

[2] In his *Short Notes of my Life*, under the year 1775, Walpole records: 'In February wrote the Epilogue to Braganza; and three letters to the author, Mr. Jephson, on tragedy.'—T. This letter is the third.

six tolerable lines, yet disposed his fable with so much address, that I think three plays have been constructed on his plot of the Earl of Essex, not one of which is much better than the original. The disposition is the next step to the choice of a subject, on which I have said enough in a former letter. A genius can surmount defects in both. If there is art in *Othello* and *Macbeth*, it seems to have been by chance; for Shakespeare certainly took no pains to adjust a plan, and in his historic plays seems to have turned Hollinshed and Stowe into verse and scenes as fast as he could write—though every now and then divine genius flashed upon particular scenes and made them immortal; as in his *King John*, where nature itself has stamped the scenes of Constance, Arthur and Hubert with her own impression, though the rest is as defective as possible. He seems to recall the Mahometan idea of lunatics, who are sometimes inspired, oftener changelings. Yet what signifies all his rubbish? He has scenes, and even speeches, that are infinitely superior to all the correct elegance of Racine. I had rather have written the two speeches of Lady Percy, in the second part of *Henry IV*, than all Voltaire, though I admire the latter infinitely, especially in *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, and *Semiramis*. Indeed, when I think over all the great authors of the Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, and English (and I know no other languages), I set Shakespeare first and alone, and then begin anew.

Well, Sir, I give up Shakespeare's dramas; and yet prefer him to every man. Why? For his exquisite knowledge of the passions and nature; for his simplicity, too, which he possesses

possesses too when most natural. Dr. Johnson says he is bombast whenever he attempts to be sublime: but this is never true but when he aims at sublimity in the expression; the glaring fault of Johnson himself.—But as simplicity is the grace of sublime, who possesses it like Shakespeare? Is not the

'Him, wondrous Him!'

in Lady Percy's speech, exquisitely sublime and pathetic too? He has another kind of sublime which no man ever possessed but he; and this is, his art in dignifying a vulgar or trivial expression. Voltaire is so grossly ignorant and tasteless as to condemn this, as to condemn *the bare bodkin*.—But my enthusiasm for Shakespeare runs away with me.

I was speaking of the negligence of his construction. You have not that fault. I own I do not admire your choice of *Braganza*, because in reality it admits of but two acts, the conspiracy and the revolution. You have not only filled it out with the most beautiful dialogue, but made the interest rise, though the revolution has succeeded. I can never too much admire the appearance of the friar, which disarms Velasquez: and yet you will be shocked to hear that, notwithstanding all I could say at the rehearsal, I could not prevail to have Velasquez drop the dagger instantly, the only artful way of getting it out of his hand; for as Lady P— observed, if he kept it two moments, he would recollect that it was the only way of preserving himself. But actors are not always judges. They persisted, for show-sake, against my remonstrances, to exhibit the

BRAGANZA.

A

TRAGEDY.

PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

WRITTEN BY

ROBERT JEPHSON, Esq.

acted for the first time feb. 17th

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MDCC LXXV.

[Price One Shilling and Six-Pence.]

WALPOLE'S COPY OF *Braganza*

the Duke and Duchess on a throne in the second act; which could not but make the audience conclude that the revolution had even then taken place.

If I could find a fault in your tragedy, Sir, it would be a want of more short speeches, of a sort of serious repartee, which gives great spirit. But I think the most of what I have to say may be comprised in a recommendation of keeping the audience in suspense, and of touching the passions by the pathetic familiar. By the latter, I mean the study of Shakespeare's strokes of nature, which, soberly used, are alone superior to poetry, and, with your ear, may easily be made harmonious.

If there is any merit in my play,[1] I think it is in interrupting the spectator's fathoming the whole story till the last, and in making every scene tend to advance the catastrophe. These arts are mechanic, I confess; but at least they are as meritorious as the scrupulous delicacy of the French in observing, not only the unities, but a fantastic decorum, that does not exist in nature, and which consequently reduce all their tragedies, wherever the scene may lie, to the manners of modern Paris. Corneille could be Roman; Racine, never but French, and consequently, though a better poet, less natural and less various. Both indeed have prodigious merit. *Phèdre*[2] is exquisite, *Britannicus*[2] admirable; and both excite pity and terror. Corneille is scarce ever tender, but always grand; yet never equal in a whole play to Racine. *Rodogune*,[3] which I greatly admire, is very defective; for the two Princes are so equally good, and the

[1] *The Mysterious Mother.*
[2] By Racine.
[3] By Corneille.

the two women so very bad, that they divide both our esteem and indignation. Yet I own, Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire ought to rank before all our tragedians, but Shakespeare. *Jane Shore*[1] is perhaps our best play after his. I admire *All for Love*[2] very much; and some scenes in *Don Sebastian*[3] and Young's *Revenge.*[4] *The Siege of Damascus*[5] is very pure—and *Phaedra and Hippolitus*[6] fine poetry, though wanting all the nature of the original. We have few other tragedies of signal merit, though the four first acts of *The Fair Penitent*[7] are very good. It is strange that Dryden, who showed such a knowledge of nature in *The Cock and Fox,* should have so very little in his plays—he could rather describe it than put into action. I have said all this, Sir, only to point out to you what a field is open to you—and though so many subjects, almost all the known, are exhausted, nature is inexhaustible, and genius can achieve anything. We have a language far more energic, and more sonorous too, than the French. Shakespeare could do what he would with it in its unpolished state. Milton gave it pomp from the Greek, and softness from the Italian; Waller now and then, here and there, gave it the elegance of the French. Dryden poured music into it; Prior gave it ease; and Gray used it masterly for either elegy or terror. Examine, Sir, the powers of a language you command, and let me again recommend

[1] By Nicholas Rowe (1714).
[2] By Dryden (1678).
[3] By Dryden (1690).
[4] By Edward Young (1721).
[5] By John Hughes (1720).
[6] By Edmund Smith (1707), based on Racine's *Phèdre;* the prologue was written by Addison, and the epilogue by Prior.—T.
[7] By Rowe. (1708).

recommend to you a diction of your own,[1] at least in some one play. The majesty of Paradise Lost would have been less imposing, if it had been written in the style of *The Essay on Man*. Pope pleases, but never surprises; and astonishment is one of the Springs of tragedy. *Coups de théâtre*, like the sublime one in *Mahomet*, have infinite effect. The incantations in *Macbeth*, that almost border on the burlesque, are still terrible. What French criticism can wound the ghosts of Hamlet or Banquo? Scorn rules, Sir, that cramp genius, and substitute delicacy to imagination in a barren language. Shall we not soar, because the French dare not rise from the ground?

You seem to possess the *tender*. The *terrible* is still more easy, at least I know to me. In all my tragedy, Adeliza contents me the least. Contrasts, though mechanic too, are very striking; and though Molière was a comic writer, he might give lessons to a tragic. But I have passed all bounds; and yet shall be glad if you can cull one useful hint out of my rhapsodies. I here put an end to them; and wish, out of all I have said, that you may remember nothing, Sir, but my motives in writing, obedience to your commands, and a hearty eagerness for fixing on our stage so superior a writer.

I am, Sir,

With great esteem and truth,

Your most obedient humble servant

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S.—I must beg you, Sir, not to let these letters go out of your

[1] Mr. Jephson followed this advice in his *Law of Lombardy*—but was not happy in his attempt.—WALPOLE.

your hands; for they are full of indigested thoughts, some perhaps capricious, as those on novel diction—but I wish to tempt genius out of the beaten road; and originality is the most captivating evidence of it.

84. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 57]

Arlington Street
April 3, 1775

Well! your book[1] is walking the town in midday. How it is liked I do not yet know. Were I to judge from my own feelings, I should say there never was so entertaining or interesting a work: that it is the most perfect model of biography; and must make Tacitus, and Agricola too, detest you. But as the world and simple I are not often of the same opinion, it will perhaps be thought very dull. If it is, all we can do is to appeal to that undutiful urchin, Posterity, who commonly treats the judgement of its parents with contempt, though it has so profound a veneration for its most distant ancestors. As you have neither imitated the teeth-breaking diction of Johnson, nor coined slanders against the most virtuous names in story, like modern historians, you cannot expect to please the reigning taste. Few persons have had time, from their politics, diversions, and gaming, to have read much of so large a volume, which they will keep for the summer, when they have full as much of nothing to do. Such as love poetry, or think themselves poets, will have hurried to the verses and been disappointed

[1] *The Life of Gray.*—T.

appointed at not finding half a dozen more Elegies in a Churchyard. A few fine gentlemen will have read one or two of the shortest letters, which not being exactly such as they write themselves, they will dislike or copy next post; they who wish or intend to find fault with Gray, you, or even me, have, to be sure, skimmed over the whole, except the Latin, for even spite, *non est tanti*—. The reviewers, no doubt, are already writing against you; not because they have read the whole, but because one's own name is always the first thing that strikes one in a book. The Scotch will be more deliberate, but not less angry; and if not less angry, not more merciful. Every Hume, however spelt, will I don't know what do; I should be sorry to be able to guess what. I have already been asked why I did not prevent publication of the censure on David? The truth is (as you know) I never saw the whole together till now, and not that part; and if I had, why ought I to have prevented it? Voltaire will cast an *imbelle* javelin *sine ictu* at Gray, for he loves to depreciate a *dead* great author, even when unprovoked,—even when he has commended him alive, or before he was so vain and so envious as he is now. The Rousseaurians will imagine that I interpolated the condemnation of his Eloïse. In short, we shall have many sins laid to our charge, of which we are innocent; but what can the malicious say against the innocent but what is not true?

I am here in brunt to the storm; you sit serenely aloof and smile at its sputtering. So should I, too, were I out of sight, but I hate to be stared at, and the object of whispers before my face. The Maccaronis will laugh out, for you say I am still

still in the fashionable world.—'What!' they will cry, as they read while their hair is curling,—'that old soul'; for old and old-fashioned are synonymous in the vocabulary of mode, alas! Nobody is so sorry as I to be in the world's fashionable purlieus; still, in truth, all this is a joke and touches me little. I seem to myself a Strulbrug, who have lived past my time, and see almost my own life written before my face while I am yet upon earth, and as it were the only one of my contemporaries with whom I began the world. Well; in a month's time there will be little question of Gray, and less of me. America and feathers and masquerades will drive us into libraries, and there I am well content to live as an humble companion to Gray and you; and, thank my stars, not on the same shelf with the Macphersons and Dalrymples.

One omission I have found, at which I wonder; you do not mention Gray's study of physic, of which he had read much, and I doubt to his hurt. I had not seen till now that delightful encomium on Cambridge, when empty of its inhabitants. It is as good as anything in the book, and has that true humour, which I think equal to any of his excellencies. So has the apostrophe to Nicholls, 'Why, you monster, I shall never be dirty and amused as long as I live,' but I will not quote any more, though I shall be reading it and reading it for the rest of my life.

But come, here is a task you must perform, and forthwith, and if you will not write to me, you shall *transcribble* to me, or I will *combustle* you. Send me incontinently all the proper names that are omitted. You know how I love writing marginal

The following is the inſcription on the Tomb ſtone of the late Mr. *Havard*, the player, placed on the ſouth ſide of the church yard of St. Paul. Covent-garden. The poetical part of the inſcription is ſaid to have been written by Mr. Havard ſome years before his death.

D. O. P.
Under this Stone
are depoſited the Remains of
Mr. WILLIAM HAVARD,
Formerly belonging to the *Theatre Royal* in *Drury-lane*.
In the year 1769 He retired
from the Stage;
He was born in Dublin July 12th, 1710,
And Died the 20th of February 1778.

Views of Ambition ne'er his hopes employ'd,
Yet honeſt fame he courted and enjoy'd;
Fair peace he cheriſh'd, as he hated ſtrife,
And lov'd and liv'd an inoffenſive life;
Not unaccompliſh'd in the ſcenic art
He grac'd the ſtage, and often reach'd the heart;
From his own ſcenes he taught diſtreſs to flow,
And manly virtue wept for civil woe;
Malevolence and envy he ne'er knew,
He never felt their darts and never threw;
With his beſt care he form'd into his plan
The moral duties of the ſocial man;
He honour'd virtue, and he lov'd his friend,
Oft from his little to the poor wou'd lend,
And prais'd his great Creator at his end
Exitus ACTA PROBAT.

A list of pieces in this Volume.

The Gospel-shop. Comedy.
Know yourown mind. Comedy.
The Skialoffent. Comedy.
The Taylors.
Trip to Calais.
The Capuchin.
The Patron.
The Devil upon two Sticks.
The Maid of Bath.
The Lozeners.

Foote's pieces.

ginal notes in my books, and there is not a word in or out of the book of which I will be ignorant. To save you trouble, here is a list of who is's. Page 152, fill up the asterisks; do. p. 174, do. 206, do. 232, 249, Peer who is it; 250? do.; the Lady of Quality? 251; the leader, 275; who the asterisk, 282? the Dr. who, 283? do. 284; the B.'s and E.'s 288, where, whose is Stratton? 290, Lord?

You see my queries are not very numerous. If you do not answer them I will not tell you a syllable of what the *fashionable* say of your book, and I do not believe you have another correspondent amongst them. At present they are labouring through a very short work, more peculiarly addressed to them, at least to a respectable part of them, the Jockey Club, who, to the latter's extreme surprise, have been consulted on a point of honour by Mr. Fitzgerald, which, however, he has already decided himself with as little conscience as they could do in their most punctilious moments.

If you will satisfy me, I will tell you the following *bon mot* of Foote, but be sure you don't read what follows till you have obeyed my commands. Foote was at Paris in October, when *Dr. Murray* was, who *admiring* or *dreading* his wit (for commentators dispute on the true reading) often invited him to dinner with his nephew. The Ambassador produced a very small bottle of Tokay, and dispensed it in very small glasses. The uncle, to prove how precious every drop, said it was of the most exquisite growth, and very old. Foote, taking up the diminutive glass, and examining it, replied, 'It is very little of its

its age.' Return me my story if you don't perform the conditions. I wish I could send you anybody's else life to write!

85. To the Rev. William Cole

[*Aetat* 57]

Arlington Street
April 25, 1775

The least I can do, dear Sir, in gratitude for the cargo of prints I have received to-day from you, is to send you a medicine. A pair of bootikins will set out to-morrow morning in the machine that goes from the Queen's Head in Gray's Inn Lane. To be certain, you had better send for them where the machine inns, lest they should neglect delivering them at Milton. My not losing a moment shows my zeal—but if you can bear a little pain, I should not press you to use them. I have suffered so dreadfully, that I constantly wear them to diminish the stock of gout in my constitution; but as your fit is very slight, and will not last, and as you are pretty sure by its beginning so late that you will never have much; and as the gout certainly carries off other complaints, had not you better endure a little, when it is rather a remedy than a disease? I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformations do but make room for some new grievance; and, in my opinoin, a disorder that requires no physician is preferable to any that does. However, I have put relief in your power, and you will judge for yourself. You must tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to the flesh; and when you take them off, it should be in bed. Rub your feet with a warm

warm cloth, and put on warm stockings, for fear of catching cold while the pores are open. It would kill anybody but me, who am of adamant, to walk out into the dew in winter in my slippers in half an hour after pulling off the bootikins. A physician sent me word, good-naturedly, that there was danger of catching cold after the bootikins, unless one was careful. I thanked him, but told him my precaution was, never taking any. All the winter I pass five days in a week without walking out, and sit often by the fireside till seven in the evening. When I do go out, whatever the weather is, I go with both glasses of the coach down, and so I do at midnight out of the hottest room. I have not had a single cold, however slight, these two years.

You are too candid in submitting at once to my defence of Mr. Mason. It is true I am more charmed with his book than I almost ever was with one. I find more people like the grave letters than those of humour, and some think the latter a little affected, which is as wrong a judgement as they could make; for Gray never wrote anything easily but things of humour. Humour was his natural and original turn—and though, from his childhood, he was grave and reserved, his genius led him to see things ludicrously and satirically; and though his health and dissatisfaction gave him low spirits, his melancholy turn was much more affected than his pleasantry in writing. You knew him enough to know I am in the right—but the world in general always wants to be told how to think, as well as what to think. The print,[1] I agree with you, though like, is a

[1] The print prefixed to the 4to edition of the *Memoirs of Gray*.—T.

a very disagreeable likeness, and the worst likeness of him. It gives the primness he had when under constraint; and there is a blackness in the countenance which was like him only the last time I ever saw him, when I was much struck with it; and, though I did not apprehend him in danger, it left an impression on me that was uneasy, and almost prophetic of what I heard but too soon after leaving him. Wilson drew the picture under much such impression, and I could not bear it in my room; Mr. Mason altered it a little, but still it is not well, nor gives any idea of the determined virtues of his heart. It just serves to help the reader to an image of the person whose genius and integrity they must admire, if they are so happy as to have a taste for either.

The peep into the gardens at Twickenham is a silly little book, of which a few little copies were printed some years ago for presents, and which now sets up for itself as a vendible book. It is a most inaccurate, superficial, blundering account of Twickenham and other places, drawn up by a Jewess, who has married twice, and turned Christian, poetess, and authoress. She has printed her poems, too, and one complimentary copy of mine, which in good breeding I could not help sending her in return for violent compliments in verse to me. I do not remember that hers were good; mine I know were very bad, and certainly never intended for the press.

I bought the first volume of Manchester, but could not read it; it was much too learned for me; and seemed rather an account of Babel than Manchester; I mean in point of antiquity. To be sure, it is very kind in an author to promise one the

From a Contemporary Print

the history of a country town, and give one a circumstantial account of the antediluvian world into the bargain. But I am simple and ignorant, and desire no more than I pay for. And then for my progenitors, Noah and the Saxons, I have no curiosity about them. Bishop Lyttelton used to plague me to death with barrows, and tumuli, and Roman camps, and all those bumps in the ground that do not amount to a most imperfect ichnography; but, in good truth, I am content with all arts when perfected, nor inquire how ingeniously people contrived to do without them—and I care still less for remains of art that retain no vestiges of art. Mr. Bryant, who is sublime in unknown knowledge, diverted me more, yet I have not finished his work, no more than he has. There is a great ingenuity in discovering all history (though it has never been written) by etymologies. Nay, he convinced me that the Greeks had totally mistaken all they went to learn in Egypt, &c., by doing, as the French do still, judge wrong by the ear—but as I have been trying now and then for above forty years to learn something, I have not time to unlearn it all again, though I allow this is our best sort of knowledge. If I should die when I am not clear in the History of the World below its first three thousand years, I should be at a sad loss on meeting with Homer and Hesiod, or any of those *moderns* in the Elysian fields, before I knew what I ought to think of them.

Pray do not betray my ignorance: the reviewers and such litterati have called me *a learned and ingenious gentleman.* I am sorry they ever heard my name, but don't let them know how irreverently I speak of the erudite, whom I dare to say they

they admire. These wasps, I suppose, will be very angry at the just contempt Mr. Gray had for them, and will, as insects do, attempt to sting, in hopes that their twelve-penny readers will suck a little venom from the momentary tumour they raise —but good night—and once more, thank you for the prints.

Yours ever,

H. W.

86. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 57]

Strawberry Hill
May 7, 1775

Of all the birds in the air, I like a Freemason best, and next a physician that gives one pills to purge melancholy. I am content to be sick, when my medicines are palatable. I remember the first words of a letter I wrote to you into Suffolk, and if you do too, repeat them if possible with exaggeration.

You are the idlest of beings, and never set pen to paper, or I am an indefatigable correspondent, and plague you with my letters. I cannot help it. Not that I have anything to say, or any reason for not waiting to hear from you. The reviews do not know yet what to say to your book, and so have not mentioned it; probably they are afraid of stumbling over the Aeolian harp again, and are weighing every word they write in a pair of lexicon-scales. Lord Nuneham, who maintained to me at first that everybody was charmed with your work, does own now that some folks begin to carp at it, had cause to dislike it, have had time to whisper their prejudices, no matter

matter. Its merit does not depend on the competence of the present age: you have fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.

You have done another service that you are not aware of. I, who, simpleton as I was, loved to be an author, am so ashamed of my own stuff, and so convinced that nobody but you and Gray could write, have taken shame to myself, and forsworn the press; yet as I cannot be idle, it is impossible, I have invented a new and very harmless way of *making books*, which diverts me as well, and brings me to no disgrace. I have just made a *new book*, which costs me only money, which I don't value, and time, which I love to employ. It is a volume of etchings by *noble authors*. They are bound in robes of crimson and gold: the titles are printed at my own press, and the pasting is *by my own hand*. What I shall *compose* next I do not know. As you too seem to have given over writing, I wish you would draw for me, or etch; but with your variety of talents, perhaps you are making another match between two musical instruments. Is Mynheer Drum contracted with Signora Flageolet? or are you contriving how to make one mouth blow a trumpet, and sing at the same time? Mr. Bentley was always inventing new dishes by compounding heterogeneous ingredients, and called it cultivating the Materia Edica; for you geniuses hate the beaten road. He never would draw with common colours, or Indian ink, but being purely indolent too, always dipped his brush in the first thing he met, no matter whether the ashes, or the oil and vinegar, or all together, and ten to one but he tasted too, whether they would not

not make a good sauce, for cleanliness was not one of his delicacies.

I have been at all the exhibitions, and do not find that we are got an inch nearer Raphael than we were. Sir Joshua has indeed produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the Primate of Ireland, whom age has softened into a beauty: all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's beggar-man. My brother has given me the view of Gray's tomb and churchyard, very prettily done, and inspired by Gray's own melancholy. I have hung it here in my favourite blue room, as a companion to Madame de Sévigné's Hôtel de Carnavalet, and call them my Penseroso and Allegro. Sir Edward was disappointed at your not revising his pentachord,[1] for you inventors are jealous gods; but I assured him you had left town in a very few days after you were with him.

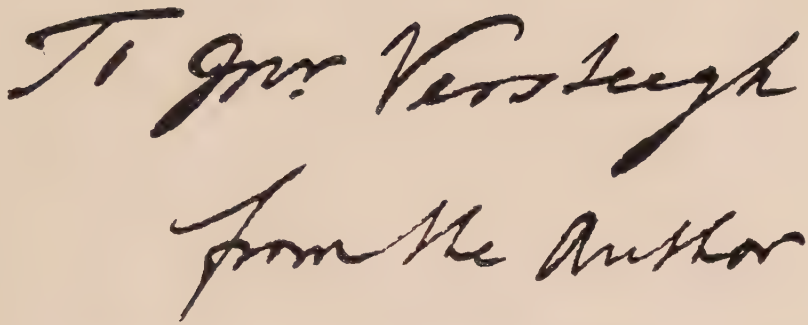
I am to dine on Monday at the Hôtel d'Harcourt. The town says the father's kingdom is soon to be invaded by the Spaniards: but the ministers, who certainly ought to know best, swear it is not true; so to be sure it is not.

I forgot to tell you that our friend Mrs. D.[2] is one of the warmest admirers of *Gray's Life;* but then she is equally charmed with Mrs. Chapone's writings, and thinks they will go a great way towards making the Bible fashionable. She lent them to me, but alas! they could not have so much effect on me, had I wanted it, for I could not read the Madam's works themselves.

Have

[1] An instrument invented by Sir Edward Walpole.—T.

[2] Doubtless Mrs. Delany, who was on very friendly terms with both Mason and Walpole.—T.



SEVEN DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN THE

ROYAL ACADEMY

BY THE

PRESIDENT.

A Presentation Copy from Sir Joshua

Have you had your summer, as we have? The fine ladies did not dare to ride on the causeway from Wednesday was se'nnight till last Friday, for fear of being tanned. We are now relapsed to fires. Adieu.

Yours most devotedly,

H. W.

P. S. I like the Hôtel d'Harcourt; it has *grand air* and a kind of Louis XIV old-fashionhood that pleases me. There is a large garden and new *parterre*, and we want some *treillage* if the Irish Exchequer would afford it. Lord N. says Oxford pouts at you as well as Cambridge. Lord Lyttelton does not admire. Mr. Palgrave, who was here this morning, says all the world admires, which is more than I demand. Pray, because you have written *the book*, do you never design to write anything else? Is the *English Garden* to be a fragment, and do you expect that anybody should finish it and write your life, as well as you have done both for Gray?

87. To Sir Horace Mann

[*Aetat* 58]

Paris

Oct. 10, 1775

I am still here, though on the wing. Your answer to mine from hence was sent back to me from England; as I have loitered here beyond my intention; in truth, from an indisposition of mind. I am not impatient to be in a frantic country, that is stabbing itself in every vein. The delirium still lasts; though, I believe, kept up by the quacks that caused it. Is it credible

credible that five or six of the great *trading* towns have presented addresses against the Americans? I have no doubt but those addresses are procured by those boobies the country gentlemen, their members, and bought of the aldermen; but is it not amazing that the merchants and manufacturers do not duck such tools in a horse-pond? When the storm will recoil I do not know, but it will be terrible in all probability, though too late. Never shall we be again what we have been! Other powers, who sit still, and wisely suffer us to plunge over head and ears, will perhaps be alarmed at what they write from England, that we are to buy twenty thousand Russian assassins, at the price of Georgia: how deep must be our game, when we pursue it at the expense of establishing a new maritime power, and aggrandize that engrossing throne, which threatens half Europe, for the satisfaction of enslaving our own brethren! Horrible policy! If the Americans, as our papers say, are on the point of seizing Canada, I should think that France would not long remain neuter, when she may regain her fur trade with the Canadians, or obtain Canada from the Americans: but it is endless to calculate what we may lose. Our court has staked everything against despotism; and the nation, which must be a loser, whichever side prevails, takes part against the Americans, who fight for the nation as well as for themselves! What Egyptian darkness!

This country is far more happy. It is governed by benevolent and beneficent men, under a prince who has not yet betrayed a fault, and who will be as happy as his people if he always employs such men. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes

sherbes are philosophers in the true sense, that is, legislators; but, as their plans tend to serve the public, you may be sure they do not please interested individuals. The French, too, are light and fickle; and designing men, who have no weapon against good men but ridicule, already employ it to make a trifling nation laugh at its benefactors: and, if it is the fashion to laugh, the laws of fashion will be executed preferably to those of common sense.

There is a great place just vacant. The Maréchal de Muy, Secrétaire d'État pour la Guerre, died yesterday, having been cut the day before for the stone. The operation lasted thirty-five ages, that is, minutes!

Our Parliament meets on the 26th, and I suppose will act as infamously as it did last year. It cannot do worse,—scarce so ill, for now it cannot act inconsiderately. To joke in voting a civil war is the *comble* of infamy. I hope it will present flattering addresses on our disgraces, and heap taxes on those who admire the necessity of them. If the present generation alone would be punished by inviting the yoke, it were pity but it were already on their necks! Do not wonder at my indignation, nor at my indulging it. I can write freely hence—from England, where I may find the Inquisition, it would not be so prudent; but judge of our situation, when an Englishman, to speak his mind, must come to France! and hither I will come unless the times alter. I had rather live where a Maupeou [1] is banished, than where he is Chief Justice.[2]

I

[1] Chancellor of France.—WALPOLE.
[2] Alluding to Lord Mansfield.—WALPOLE.

I know nothing of their Royal Highnesses,[1] nor have heard of them since they were at Strasburg. I wrote twice to Venice; and if they think me in England, and have written thither, I should have received the letter, as I did yours, unless it is stopped. I can give you no advice, but to act prudently and decently, as you always do. If you receive orders, you must obey them. If you do not, you may show disposition; and yet I would not go too far. Even under orders, you may intimate concern; but I would express nothing in writing. My warmth may hurt itself, but never shall make me forget the interest of my friends. Adieu!

88. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 58]

Feb. 18, 1776

As my illness prevented my answering your delightful letter, I do not see why the leisure and solitude of convalescence should not be employed in replying to it; not poetically, for the current of the blood, frozen by age and chalkstoned by the gout, does not, though loosened from disease, flow over the smooth pebbles of Helicon. Mine, at best, were factitious rills that, like the artificial cascatelle of Hagley, played for moments to entertain visitors, and were not the natural bounty of the soil. *You* are forced to restrain your torrent, and the dykes of prudence must be borne down before it overflows the country. Not so Mr. Anstey; because his muddy mill-pool had in one point of view the roar and lustre of a cascade when it fell over a

[1] The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

1760.

Of Wisdom & Cunning

& their Consequences

True & False Greatness

Lord M. to the Earl of Bute. &c

Quos irrupta tenet Copula. Hor:

Pollio! to Thee, my Patron & my Friend
The secret Councills of my Soul I send
Long since, thy godlike Unkle held me dear
(Fate gave me, early, to thy House's Care)
He dy'd, & left me Unattach'd, & Free,
Left me, a Legacy from Him, to Thee
Memory, Rare Gift! but given us to our cost:
Thou faithfull Register of Good — when lost!
Each Feature, of the favourite Picture, trace;
Recall his Ease, his Dignity & Grace
His Courage cool, his Wisdom void of Art.
The gentlest Manners, & the warmest Heart,
His Soul, with every nobler Passion fraught,
And carrying Friendship, sometimes to a Fault

'The Epistle of Another Kind,' by George Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe

a proper wheel, he thinks every pailful of its water, though soused down by a ploughman, has the same effect. His *Somersetshire Dialogue* is stupidity itself; you described it prophetically before you saw it.

Somebody or other has given us an epistle of another kind by the late Lord Melcombe;—not different from having more meaning, for Phoebus knows it has none at all, but so civil, so harmless, and so harmonious, that it is the ghost of one of Pope's tunes. How the puffy peer must have sweated when learning to sing of Pope, whom he could have strangled! The whole and sole drift of this cantata is to call Lord Bute 'Pollio,' and to beg to be his vicegerent upon earth. I should like to have heard Lord Bute asking Sir Harry Erskine who 'Pollio' was.

Mr. Whitehead has just published a pretty poem called *Variety*, in which there is humour and ingenuity, but not more poetry than is necessary for a Laureate; however, the plan is one, and is well wound up. I now pass to prose.

Lo, there is just appeared a truly classic work: a history, not majestic like Livy, nor compressed like Tacitus; not stamped with character like Clarendon; perhaps not so deep as Robertson's *Scotland*, but a thousand degrees above his *Charles;* not pointed like Voltaire, but as accurate as he is inexact; modest as he is *tranchant*, and sly as Montesquieu without being so *recherché*. The style is as smooth as a Flemish picture, and the muscles are concealed and only for natural uses, not exaggerated like Michael Angelo's to show the painter's skill in anatomy; nor composed of the limbs of clowns of different nations

nations, like Dr. Johnson's heterogeneous monsters. This book is Mr. Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* He is son of a foolish alderman, is a member of Parliament, and called a whimsical one because he votes variously as his opinion leads him; and his first production was in French, in which language he shines too. I know him a little, never suspected the extent of his talents, for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too, but I intend to know him a great deal more—there! there is food for your residence at York.

Do I know nothing superior to Mr. Gibbon? yes, but not what will entertain you at York; Mr. Gibbon's are good sense and polished art. I talk of great original genius. Lady Di Beauclerk has made seven large drawings in sut-water (her first attempt of the kind) for scenes of my *Mysterious Mother.* Oh, such drawings! Guido's grace, Albano's children, Poussin's expression, Salvator's boldness in landscape, and Andrea Sacchi's simplicity of composition might perhaps have equalled them had they wrought all together very fine. How an author's vanity can bestow bombast panegyric on his flatterers! Pray, Sir, when did I take myself for an original genius! Did not Shakespeare draw Hamlet from Olaus Ostrogothus, or some such name; did Le Soeur conceive the Chartreuse from any merit in the legend of St. Bruno? Seeing is believing, miracles are not ceased. I know how prejudiced I am apt to be; some time or other you will see whether I am so in this instance.

Now

Now for specific answers to your queries; many of which answers will not be specific, for I know little more than if I were at York. I know nothing of Garrick's sale of patent, but I know forty stories of his envy and jealousy that are too long to tell you by mouth of pen; of a Monsr. le Texier, another real prodigy, who acts whole plays, in which every character is perfect—and pray observe he has not read *my* play. In sum, Garrick says when he quits the stage, he will read plays too, but they will be better than Monsr. Texier's (who only reads those of other authors), for he shall write them himself. This I know he has said twice. *Ex pede Herculem.* The Duchess of Kingston only knows whether she will be tried. The Earl's zeal against her was as marvellous to me as to you; I know reasons why he should have done the reverse, and cannot reconcile contradictions. Why should not Sayers' affair sleep? what, who is awake? For your hundred other queries which you have not put to me, I shall not attempt to guess them, not from idleness, but from the probable incapacity of my being able to answer them. The womb of time is big; we shall see whether she is delivered of mice or mountains.

One word about myself, and I have done. I know you disliked my answer to Dr. Milles, and I know I was angry both at him and Mr. Hume. The latter had acted very treacherously by the story I have hinted at of the Swiss reviewer. Dr. Milles is a fool, who had been set on by Lord Hardwicke and that set, and at whom I have glanced. I have received many indirect little mischiefs from the Earl, who has of late courted

me

me as much, and I have been civil to him. But my answers shall some time or other appear, when I only shall be blamed and my antagonists will be dead, and not hurt by them. For Mr. Masters, he is a dirty simpleton, who began by flattering me, and because I neglected him, joined the pack. The arguments in the answers are very essential to the question, and I shall not give myself the trouble of extracting the ridicule on the answerers, as they deserved it.

My hands you see are well, but I could not have written so long an epistle with my feet, which are still in their flannels. As my spirits always revive in proportion as pain subsides, I shall take the liberty (Sir Residentiary) to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticize, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a licence I adopted in my second line:

Though lame and old, I do not burn
With fretfulness to scare ye;
And charms and wit like yours would turn
To May my January.
The God who can inspire and heal
Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy,
For as I read, I feel, I feel,
I'm not quite January.

Probably you would have liked better to have the eclogue, but I had not leave to send it.

I

89. To the Rev. William Cole

[*Aetat* 59]

Strawberry Hill
June 19, 1777

I thank you for your notices, dear Sir, and shall remember that on Prince William. I did see the *Monthly Review*, but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery. I believe Macpherson's success with *Ossian* was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie; he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than Lord Surry—but I have no objection to anybody believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius—but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V than it was at court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the Bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in *Hudibras*—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's

terton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Rowley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age. Change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

The other story you tell me is very credible and perfectly in character.

Yours ever,
H. W.

90. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 59]

Strawberry Hill
July 6, 1777

I don't know anybody so much in the wrong as you are for not coming to me this summer; you would see such a marvellous closet, so small, so perfect, so respectable; you would swear it came out of Havering in the Bower, and that Catherine de Valois used to retire into it to write to Owen Tudor. Lady Di's drawings—no offence to yours—are hung on Indian blue damask, the ceiling, door and surbase are gilt, and in the window are two brave *fleur de lis* and a lion of England, all royally crowned in painted glass, which, as Queen Catherine never did happen to write a *billet doux* in this closet, signify Beauclerc, the denomination of the tower. This cabinet is to be

be sacred and not shown to the profane, as the drawings are not for the eyes of the vulgar. Yours shall have a place, which is the greatest honour I can do them. Miss Pope[1] the actress, who is at Mrs. Clive's, dined here yesterday, and literally shed tears, though she did not know the story. I think this is more to Lady Di's credit, than a tomtit pecking at painted fruit. The ceiling was fortunately finished some time ago. My plasterer is turned raving Methodist, and has sent me a frantic letter without sense or grammar, but desiring leave to open me a new plan of the Gospel. I am glad he had no *new light* about making stucco!

Those gentry the Methodists will grow troublesome, or worse; they were exceedingly unwilling to part with that impudent hypocrite, Dr. Dodd, and not less, to have forgery criminal. I own I felt very much for the poor wretch's protracted sufferings—but that was not the motive of their countenance; I cannot bear a militant arch-inquisitor, or an impostor in a tabernacle. Thank you for your reply to the former, etc.

I have no more *Gazettes Litteraires*, or *Politiques*. Linguet, the outcast of France, has published one here that makes some noise; part is satire on us, part panegyric, but in general very superficial. I have an anecdote apropos to him that is very curious. I will tell it you some day or other, but as it is a secret, I must not communicate it to the post office.

They have sent me from town a fourth volume of the *Archaeologia*

[1] Jane Pope (1742-1818), the original 'Mrs. Candour' in *The School for Scandal*.—T.

Archaeologia, or Old Women's Logic; the first paragraph is as complete nonsense as my plasterer's letter.

Don't let this horrid weather put you out of humour with your *Garden*, though I own it is pity we should have brought gardening to perfection, and have too bad a climate to enjoy it. It is strictly true this year, as I have often said, that ours is the most beautiful country in the world, when framed and glazed; but remember you can make the sun shine when you please, and as much as you please, and yet the verdure of your garden will be ever green. You are an excellent parish priest, catechize and make terriers, I believe, in perfection; but pray do not forget poor poetry, your natural vocation, as you have done so long; but you must be everything, an inventor of musical instruments, a painter, and a law suitor—

Besides a hundred freaks that died in thinking.

Well, I cannot help loving you with all your faults and all your perfections.

I am just now in great trouble, though a little relieved to-day by a better account. The Duke of Gloucester is extremely ill, and my poor niece in despair! They are coming if they can to England for a little time, as the heat of the south is too mighty for him. How dear has ambition cost her! Adieu.

As it is right to be impartial, which I am not naturally, I must tell you that at the end of the new *Archaeologia* there is a very good essay on ancient castles, with very curious matter, by a Mr. King. I don't know who he is—but it rains again, and there is no bearing it.

As

91. To Viscount Nuneham

[*Aetat* 59]

Strawberry Hill
July 7, 1777

As I know your Lordship and Lady Nuneham are so good as to interest yourselves about the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of telling you, that, though the express on Saturday was as bad as possible, yet another letter yesterday from the Duke's surgeon, dated three days later, brought a more favourable account. His Royal Highness had been taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, as it was thought nothing but change of air and motion could save him. He bore the travelling for two days very well, and got eight hours of sleep. The third day he was less well from fatigue, but the surgeon did not think him otherwise worse. I hope in God this alarm will pass off like the former!—but nothing, except her own words, could paint the agonies of the Duchess. She is alarmed too for the little Prince. They are coming to England, but not to stay, as Italian winters agree with the Duke, though the summers are so prejudicial.

Now I have taken this liberty, my dear Lord, I must take a little more; you know my old admiration and envy are your garden. I do not grudge Pomona or Sir James Cockburn their hothouses, nor intend to ruin myself by raising sugar and water in tanner's bark and peach skins. The Flora Nunehamica is the height of my ambition, and if your Linnaeus should have

have any disciple that would condescend to look after my little flower-garden, it would be the delight of my eyes and nose, provided the cataracts of heaven are ever shut again! Not one proviso do I make, but that the pupil be not a Scot. We had peace and warm weather before the inundation of that northern people, and therefore I beg to have no Attila for my gardener.

Apropos, don't your Lordship think that another set of legislators, the Maccaronis and Maccaronesses, are very wise? People abuse them for turning days, nights, hours, and seasons topsy-turvy; but surely it was upon mature reflection. We had a set of customs and ideas borrowed from the continent that by no means suited our climate. Reformers bring back things to their natural course. Notwithstanding what I said in spite in the paragraph above, we are in truth but Greenlanders and ought to conform to our climate. We should lay in store of provisions and candles and masquerades and coloured lamps for ten months in the year, and shut out our twilight and enjoy ourselves. In September and October we may venture out of our ark and make our hay and gather in our corn, and go to horse-races, and kill pheasants and partridges for stock for our winter's supper. I sailed in a skiff and pair this morning to Lady Cecilia Johnston, and found her, like a good housewife, sitting over her fire, with her cats and dogs and birds and children. She brought out a dram to warm me and my servants, and we were very merry and comfortable. As Lady Nuneham has neither so many two-footed or four-footed cares upon her hands, I hope her hands have been better employed.

I wish I could peep over her shoulder one of these wet mornings!

Adieu, my dear Lord; forgive all my babble. Yesterday's letter raised my spirits, and I love to impart my satisfaction to those I love, which, with all due respect, I must take leave to say I feel for you, and am most sincerely, etc.

[*Aetat* 60]

92. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

Thursday night, Dec. 11, 1777

I do not write, Madam, to tell you politics; you will hear them better from Lord Ossory: nor indeed have I words to paint the abject impudent poltroonery of the ministers, or the blockish stupidity of the Parliament.

Lord North yesterday declared he should during the recess prepare to lay before the Parliament proposals of peace to be offered to the Americans! *I trust we have force enough to bring forward an accommodation.* They were his very words. Was ever proud insolent nation sunk so low! Burke and Charles Fox told him the administration thought of nothing but keeping their places; and so they will, and the members their pensions, and the nation its infamy. Were I Franklin, I would order the Cabinet Council to come to me at Paris with ropes about their necks, and then kick them back to St. James's.

Well, Madam, as I told Lord Ossory t'other day, I am satisfied—Old England is safe, that is, America, whither the true

true English retired under Charles the First:—this is Nova Scotia, and I care not what becomes of it.

I have just been at *Percy*.[1] The four first acts are much better than I expected, and very animated. There are good situations, and several pretty passages, but not much nature. There is a fine speech of the heroine to her father, and a strange sermon against Crusades, that ends with a description of the Saviour, who died for our sins. The last act is very ill-conducted, unnatural, and obscure. Earl Douglas is a savage ruffian. Earl Percy is converted by the virtue of his mistress, and she is *love and virtue* in the supreme degree. There is a prologue and epilogue about fine ladies and fine gentlemen, and feathers and buckles, and I don't doubt every word of both Mr. Garrick's, for they are commonplace, and written for the upper gallery. It was very moderately performed, but one passage against the *odious Scot* Douglas was loudly applauded, and showed that the mob have no pensions.

Our brave administration have turned out Lord Jersey and Mr. Hopkins, which will certainly convince all America and all Europe, that they are not afraid; though I saw one of their tools to-day who assured me they are,—nay, he said (and *he* is somebody) that if the Congress insists on the ministry being changed it must be. I do not believe the Congress will do them so much honour; but I answered, 'Sir, if the Congress should make that condition, it will not be from caring about it, but to make the pacification impossible. I do not believe they care much more for the opposition than for the administration; but they

[1] A tragedy by Hannah More.

PERCY,

A

TRAGEDY.

AS IT IS ACTED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

By Miss Hannah More.
acted first in December 1777.

LONDON:

PRINTED for T. CADELL, in the STRAND.

MDCCLXXVIII.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.]

WALPOLE'S COPY OF *Percy*

they must know that the opposition could not, would not, grant terms, that this administration should refuse.'

Adieu, Madam! I am at last not sorry you have no son, and your daughters, I hope, will be married to Americans, and not in this dirty, despicable island!

93. To Sir Horace Mann

[*Aetat* 60]

Arlington Street
Feb. 18, 1778

I do not know how to word the following letter; how to gain credit with you! How shall I intimate to you, that you must lower your topsails, waive your imperial dignity, and strike to the colours of the thirteen United Provinces of America? Do not tremble, and imagine that Washington has defeated General Howe, and driven him out of Philadelphia; or that Gates has taken another army; or that Portsmouth is invested by an American fleet. No: no sacrifice has been made on the altar of peace. Stop again: peace is not made, it is only implored,—and I fear, only on this side of the Atlantic. In short, yesterday, *February* 17th, a most memorable era, Lord North opened his conciliatory plan,—no partial, no collusive one. In as few words as I can use, it solicits peace with the States of America: it haggles on no terms; it acknowledges the Congress, or anybody that pleases to treat; it confesses errors, misinformation, ill-success, and impossibility of conquest; it disclaims taxation, desires commerce, hopes for assistance, allows the independence of America, not verbally, yet virtually, and suspends hostilities till June 1779. It does

a

a little more: not *verbally*, but *virtually*, it confesses that the opposition have been in the right from the beginning to the end.

The warmest American cannot deny but these gracious condescensions are ample enough to content that whole continent; and yet, my friend, such accommodating facility had one defect,—it came too late. The treaty between the high and mighty States and France is signed; and instead of peace, we must expect war with the high allies. The French army is come to the coast, and their officers here are recalled.

The House of Commons embraced the plan, and voted it *nemine contradicente*. It is to pass both Houses with a rapidity that will do everything but overtake time past. All the world is in astonishment. As my letter will not set out till the day after to-morrow, I shall have time to tell you better what is thought of this amazing step.

Feb. 20.

In sooth I cannot tell you what is thought. Nobody knows what to think. To leap at once from an obstinacy of four years to a total concession of everything; to stoop so low, without hopes of being forgiven—who can understand such a transformation? I must leave you in all your wonderment; for the cloud is not dispersed. When it shall be, I doubt it will discover no serene prospect! All that remains certain is, that America is not only lost but given up. We must no longer give ourselves Continental airs! I fear even our trident will find it has lost a considerable prong.

I have lived long, but never saw such a day as last Tuesday!

From

From the first I augured ill of this American war; yet do not suppose that I boast of my penetration. Far was I from expecting such a conclusion! Conclusion!—*y sommes-nous?* Acts of Parliament have made a war, but cannot repeal one. They have provoked—not terrified; and Washington and Gates have respected the Speaker's mace no more than Oliver Cromwell did.

You shall hear as events arise. I disclaim all sagacity, and pretend to no foresight. It is not an Englishman's talent. Even the second sight of the Scots has proved a little purblind.

You have heard that Voltaire is actually at Paris? Perhaps soon you will learn French news earlier than I can.

What scenes my letters to you have touched on for eight-and-thirty years! I arrived here at the eve of the termination of my father's happy reign. The Rebellion, as he foresaw, followed; and much disgrace. Another war ensued, with new disgraces. And then broke forth Lord Chatham's sun; and all was glory and extensive empire. Nor tranquillity nor triumph are our lot now! The womb of time is not with child of a mouse,—but adieu! I shall probably write again before you have digested half the meditations this letter will have conjured up.

94. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 61]

Bedfordshire
April 8, 1779

I did not answer your Ladyship's letter, as I generally do, the moment I received it, because I had nothing to tell you about

about the remnant of myself, which is the worst subject in the world. I have been six days at Strawberry Hill, and I think the soft south-west did me good; but I have a constant feverish heat that seems to be undermining my ruins; however, its progress is very slow; and so if you please we will say no more of it; but your goodness in inquiring is written on my heart's last tablet. Mr. Mason was with me for two days: he is printing the third book of his *Garden*.

Lord Harrington is gathered to his fathers, or rather, is taken from his *mothers*. Lord Beauchamp's son is well again. Lord Harrington has left my Lady 2,500*l.* besides her jointure of 1,500*l.* a year; to Lady Anna Maria 6,000*l.*; 5,000*l.* to Mr. Stanhope, and an estate of 150*l.* a year; but there are so many debts that the legacies are more magnificent than generous. The charming house at St. James's is to be sold; but it is supposed the present Earl will purchase it.

This is all I have heard, Madam, since I came to town yesterday, which is perfectly empty; the grass grows in the streets, though nowhere else, for the climate is turned as Asiatic as the government; and it is to be hoped that in time there will be elephants and tigers of our own growth in the Sultan's gardens, to the great satisfaction of Sir William Chambers. I was pleased yesterday to see that, though everything old-fashioned is going out of date, we have still resources. If our trade decays we have new handicrafts: at Turnham Green I read on a large board—*manufacture of temples.* I suppose the Archbishop of York will set up looms in his diocese for

for Popish chapels, and Manchester weave dungeons for the Inquisition. The Pope's bull against the Dissenters' Bill is actually issued from the Clarendon printing-house. I was interrupted by the strangest story I ever heard, and which I cannot yet believe, though it is certainly true. Last night as Miss Wray[1] was getting into her coach in Covent Garden from the play, a clergyman shot her through the head, and then himself. She is dead; but he is alive to be hanged—in the room of Sir Hugh Palliser. Now, Madam, can one believe such a tale? How could poor Miss Wray have offended a divine? She was no enemy to the church militant or naval, to the Church of England, or the church of Paphos. I do not doubt but it will be found that the assassin was a Dissenter, and instigated by the Americans to give such a blow to the state. My servants have heard that the murderer was the victim's husband: methinks his jealousy was very long-suffering! *Tantaene animis caelestibus iræ!* and that he should not have compounded for a deanery! What trials Lord Sandwich goes through! he had better have one for all.

Friday, 9th

I gave David this letter yesterday, and had forgotten to seal it, which he did not perceive till I was gone out for the evening. Instead of sealing it he kept it for me till this morning after I had written my second. I send both to show I have been punctual, though all the novelty is evaporated, and my intelligence is not worth a farthing more than the newspaper.

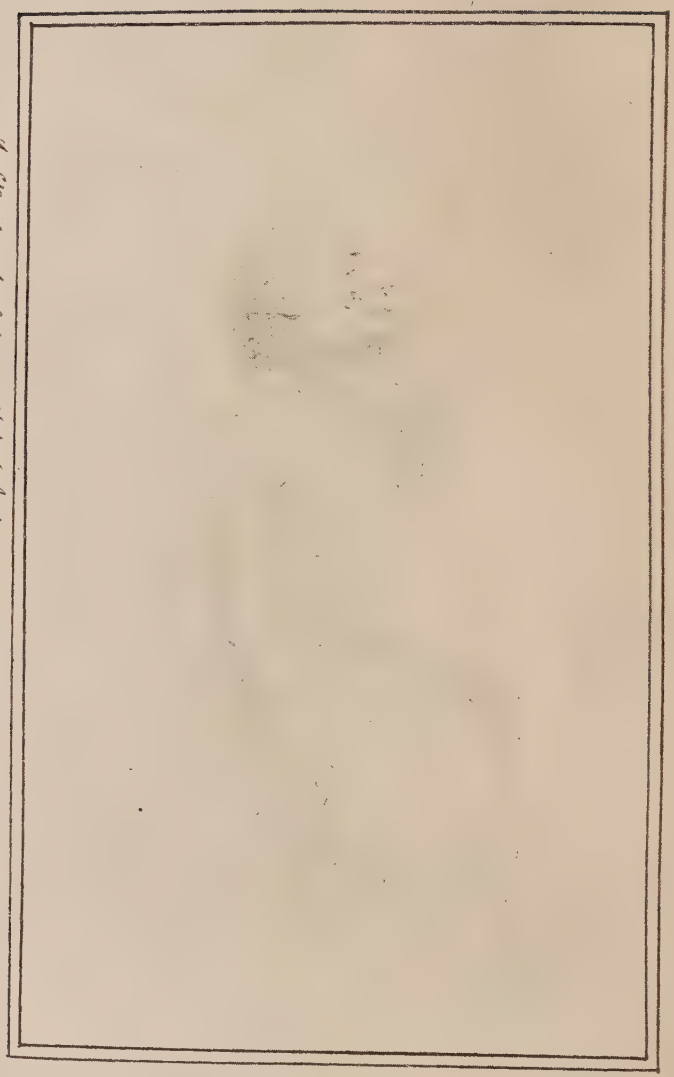
Ladies

[1] Miss Martha Ray, mistress of Lord Sandwich.

April 9, 1779

Ladies, said a certain philosopher, always tell their minds in the postscript. As that is the habitation of truth, I send you, Madam, a little more truth than there was in my narrative of yesterday, which was warm from the first breath of rumour: yet though this is only a postscript I will not answer for its perfect veracity. It is the most authentic account I have yet been able to collect of so strange a story, of which no doubt you are curious to know more.

The assassin's name is Hackman; he is brother to a reputable tradesman in Cheapside, and is of a very pleasing figure himself, and most engaging behaviour. About five years ago he was an officer in the 66th Regiment, and being quartered at Huntingdon, pleased so much as to be invited to the oratorios at Hinchinbrook, and was much caressed there. Struck with Miss Ray's charms he proposed marriage, but she told him she did not choose to carry a knapsack. He went to Ireland, and there changed the colour of his cloth, and at his return, I think not long ago, renewed his suit, hoping a cassock would be more tempting than a gorget; but in vain. Miss Wray, it seems, has been out of order, and abroad but twice all the winter. She went to the play on Wednesday night for the second time with Galli the singer. During the play the desperate lover was at the Bedford Coffee House, and behaved with great calmness, and drank a glass of capillaire. Towards the conclusion, he sallied into the piazza, waiting till he saw his victim handed by Mr. Macnamara. He came behind her, pulled



The Rev. J. Hackman

pulled her by the gown, and on her turning round, clapped the pistol to her forehead, and shot her through the head. With another pistol he then attempted to shoot himself, but the ball only grazing his brow, he tried to dash out his own brains with the pistol, and is more wounded by those blows than by the ball.

Lord Sandwich was at home expecting her to supper at half an hour after ten. On her not returning an hour later, he said something must have happened: however, being tired, he went to bed at half an hour after eleven, and was scarce in bed before one of his servants came in and said Miss Ray was shot. He stared, and could not comprehend what the fellow meant; nay, lay still, which is full as odd a part of the story as any. At twelve came a letter from the surgeon to confirm the account; and then he was extremely afflicted.

Now, upon the whole, Madam, is not the story full as strange as ever it was? Miss Ray has six children, the eldest son is fifteen, and she was at least three times as much. To bear a hopeless passion for five years, and then murder one's mistress—I don't understand it! If the story clears up at all, your Ladyship shall have a sequel. These circumstances I received from Lord Hertford, who heard them at court yesterday from the Lords of the Admiralty. I forgot that the Galli swooned away on the spot.

I do not love tragic events *en pure perte*. If they do happen, I would have them historic. This is only of kin to history, and tends to nothing. It is very impertinent in one Hackman, to rival Herod, and shoot Mariamne—and *that* Mariamne a kept

kept mistress! and yet it just sets curiosity agog, because she belongs to Lord Sandwich, at a critical moment—and yet he might as well have killed any other inhabitant of Covent Garden.

95. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Aetat* 62]

Berkeley Square
Nov. 29, 1779

I desired Mr. Stonhewer on Saturday to write to you, and to tell you why I could not. From him or from the newspapers, who know everything as well and as soon as anybody, you will have learnt that the edifice of the majority does not, like the chief temple of the Philistines, rest on two slight pillars, which being removed, the whole fabric fell to pieces, but when pilasters take themselves for buttresses, no wonder they are mistaken. Such has been the fate of the Lords Gower and Weymouth, and I wish everybody saw them in as contemptible a light as I do. The last has attempted to avoid no degree of shame, for he is actually run away to Longleat. However, they do not give up the game, but have a matadore still to play *a black ace.*

So you think that we are still living on Thursday's debate and division! You are extremely mistaken, good Sir; we have fresh events every morning, not revolutions indeed, nor sea-fights, nor rebellions—all in good time. But we can furnish you every day with occurrences so strange and unexpected, that you folks in the country would live on a single one for three

three months. Come, what do you like? what do you choose? Is not a sudden death very comfortable in a long winter's evening over a sea-coal fire? or is a duel more to your taste? What young profligate would you wish hurried out of the world in an instant—I mean only as a beautiful flower that would close a sermon delicately, that you are composing on the debaucheries and gaming of the age? Would not there be still more dignity in it, if he were a young peer? or shall he be a fashionable orator? or a grave judge—or shall he be all three? You are a little difficult, Mr. Mason, and yet in these times much may be done to serve a friend. Or what think you of a single combat seasoned with a little spice of premeditated assassination *à la* Sam Martin,[1] which pray observe does not signify Saint Martin.

Well, then, I will try to please you if I can. Know then that on Saturday night one of his Majesty's Chief Justices in Eyre, after having vented a warm philippic on Thursday *against* the administration, and after having retired to his house at Epsom on Friday, attended only by four virgins, whom he had picked up in the Strand, and after having supped plentifully on the said Saturday on fish and venison, finding himself indisposed, went to bed, rung his bell in ten minutes, and in one minute after the arrival of his servant, expired! But what signifies sudden death without forewarning? He had said on Thursday that he should die in three days, had dreamt so and felt it would be so: on Saturday he said, 'If I outlive to-day

[1] Samuel Martin practiced at a target before challenging Wilkes.—T.

to-day I shall go on;'—but enough of him. My next event is worth ten of this.

As Lord Lyttelton had spoken *against* the ministers, Mr. Adam, nephew of the architects, spoke *for* them. It is supposed that whenever Scotland was dissatisfied with, pooh! I mean, not satisfied by, Lord North, Adam was delegated to run at him; and now and then might have a plenary indulgence from the Pope for talking the language of opposition, in order to worm out secrets—poor souls! as if they had any.

Well, on Thursday he made a most absurd speech in favour of the court, which Charles Fox tore piecemeal with infinite humour and argument, which tortured the patient so much that next day he asked an explanation. Fox assured him he had meant nothing personal, but had a right to dislocate his arguments, and he was satisfied; but on Sunday he sent a Scotch major to Fox to complain of the state of the debate in the newspapers, and to desire Mr. Fox would contradict and declare his good opinion of him. Fox returned for answer, that he was not responsible for accounts in newspapers; that it was harder still if on their misrepresentation he must give a good character of any man they abused: he again declared he had intended no offence, and that Mr. Adam was welcome to show that declaration to anybody. After consultation, Adam returned that Mr. Fox must print that recantation. 'Hold!' said Fox, 'not so far neither.'—Oh, I forgot the principal circumstance of all: Adam added that his *friends* would not be satisfied under less than publication. At eight this morning they went into Hyde Park, Fox with Fitzpatrick, Adam with his

his Major Humberston for seconds. Adam fired, and the ball wounded Charles Fox's side, though very slightly: he then fired, missed, and said, 'Now, Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?'

Near as you are to the Tweed you will not guess the reply. 'No,' said Adam; 'you must still print your letter.' Nothing could be more unjust, more unfair. They had fought because Fox would *not* consent to that pretension. Fox with the same firmness and temper with which he had conducted himself through the whole affair peremptorily refused, and the blood-hound again fired, but missed, and then Fox fired into the air and it ended.

An odd circumstance larded this history. Humberston was waiting for him at Fox's house, and so was Sheridan: when Charles was come home and had dispatched the bravo, Sheridan said, 'Pray who is that ill-looking fellow? he looks like the carrier of a challenge.'

Well, I am sure I have made amends for having been punished by the gout, and here too have I been writing in bed till eleven at night, but thank you I am better and was in the other room from twelve till six to-day, when my pains returned; yet finding them easier at nine, I was eager to be the first to tell you two such strange events. Half the town have been reading the latter correspondence in Charles Fox's room the whole morning, and I received it piping hot, except that I have abridged it a little, from a very accurate reporter. Adieu, or the bellman will be gone.[1]

You

[1] Letters for late post were formerly collected by a bellman, who was a post-office official.—T.

96. To the Rev. William Cole

[*Aetat* 62]

Strawberry Hill
March 13, 1780

You compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently do we see portraits that have catched the features and missed the countenance or character! which is far more difficult to hit. Nor is it infrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call *the worst kind of reading*. I cannot comprehend but they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition of Atkyns's *Gloucestershire*, as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, *A View of Northumberland*, in two volumes quarto, with cuts; but I do not devour it fast, for the author's predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions, that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country—nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called something

something else in Antoninus's *Itinerary*. I do not say that the Gothic antiquities that I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The site of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps—has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments?—the moment it is uncertain, it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history; and then I neither desire to see or read of them.

I have been diverted, too, to another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo, pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Wray, that he murdered.[1] I doubt whether the letters are genuine; and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character—hers appears less natural; and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of hers, than of his. It is not probable that Lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartment to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they come to light.

You will wonder how I should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for my doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter, in which

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[1] *Love and Madness, a Story too true, in a Series of Letters between Parties whose names could perhaps be mentioned were they less known or less lamented,* by Herbert Croft (1751-1816) who succeeded in 1797 as fifth Baronet. The letters are fictitious.—T.

I am frequently mentioned, could be written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that Miss Wray desired him to give her a particular account of Chatterton. He does give a most ample one—but is there a glimpse of probability that a being so frantic should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister, and others, with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered Miss Wray, I think, in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could ever see it. There are notes, indeed, by the editor, who has certainly seen it—but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume. I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious; but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of the *young villain*—but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle, who he says, as is true, checked Lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into Parliament; and must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted Lord Chatham with youth, who was at least six or seven years younger than he was—and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was then not twenty-three

MODERN ANECDOTE

OF THE

ANCIENT FAMILY

OF THE

Kinkvervankotſdarſprakengotchderns:

A TALE

FOR

CHRISTMAS 1779.

Dedicated to the Honorable

HORACE WALPOLE.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

And Sold by

G. RILEY, Bookſeller, at the *City Circulating Library*,

St. Paul's Church-yard;

MDCCLXXXI.

LADY CRAVEN'S 'LITTLE TALE'

twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder, I see, people will, and talk of what they do not understand; and what care I? There is another trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes that it was Macpherson who communicated Ossian to me. It was Sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimens. Macpherson did once come to me—but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Ailesbury has promised me guinea-eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay.

I am well acquainted with Lady Craven's little tale[1] dedicated to me. It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it.

I will stop, for fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention; I think it was of the 28th of last month.

Yours entirely,
H. WALPOLE.

97. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Aetat* 62]

[*May*, 1780]

The newspapers have told you all that I could have said, and that nothing has happened worth repeating or detailing. The spirit you raised is evaporated or split into a thousand branches by mismanagement. The opposition is as much divided

[1] *Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkewankotsdarprakengotchderns; A Tale for Christmas*, 1779.—T.

divided amongst themselves, as they and the ministers; and those squabbles more than any other cause have re-established the predominance of the court. The Bishop of St. Asaph showed me a sensible letter from his son, the Dean, who says it was with much difficulty that he prevailed to have the committee of their county adjourned, and that it would have been infallibly dissolved if he had pressed the Association. In short, I can only lament that the sole chance we have had in so many years of recovering the vigour of this country has been thrown away. The ministers, though detesting each other more than the factions in the opposition, have had the sense not to quarrel, and they reap the benefit of *unanimity*, which we professed and could not observe for a moment.

Did you see *Royal Reflections?* They are excellent, and I am persuaded were written by Fitzpatrick. The courtiers are restringing their lyres too. There is an ode, said to be written by Soame Jenyns, and I believe so from one or two strokes of humour, though in general a paltry performance. The preface is an attack on Gray and you, who I am sure are our only Pindars. The conclusion ironically implores liberty:—

> To shield us safe, beneath her guardian wings,
> From Law, Religion, ministers, and kings.

Soame Jenyns does think, I do not doubt, that ministers ought to be our law, and kings our religion. When you are in your own-*issime* vein, I trust you will remember him.

You know, I suppose, that the Royal Academy at Somerset House is opened. It is quite a Roman palace, and finished in perfect

perfect taste as well as boundless expense. It would have been a glorious apparition at the conclusion of the great war; now it is an insult on our poverty and degradation. There is a sign-post by West of his Majesty holding the memorial of his late campaign, lest we should forget that he was at Coxheath when the French fleet was in Plymouth Sound. By what lethargy of loyalty it happened I do not know, but *there* is also a picture of Mrs. Wright modelling the head of Charles the First, and their Majesties contemplating it. Gainsborough has five landscapes there, of which one especially is worthy of any collection, and of any painter that ever existed.

There is come out a Life of Garrick, in two volumes, by Davies the bookseller, formerly a player. It is written naturally, simply, without pretensions, nay, and without partiality (though under the auspices of Dr. Johnson), unless, as it seems, the prompter reserved all the flattery to himself, and according to an epigram on the late Queen and the Hermitage,—

> whispered, Let the incense all be mine.

In consequence, the author calls the pedant the greatest man of the age, and compares his trumpery tragedy of *Irene* to *Cato*. However, the work is entertaining, and deserves immortality for preserving that *sublime* saying of Quin (which, by the way, he profanes by calling it a *bon mot*), who disputing on the execution of Charles I, and being asked by his antagonist by what law he was put to death, replied, 'By all the laws he had left them.' I wish you would translate it into

into Greek, and write it in your 'Longinus'; it has ten times more grandeur, force, and meaning than anything he cites.

Apropos to the theatre, I have read *The School for Scandal:* it is rapid and lively, but is far from containing the wit I expected from seeing it acted.

May I leap from the stage to the bench? Sir Thomas Rumbold, one of our Indian mushrooms, asked his father-in-law, the Bishop of Carlisle, to answer for a child that he had left in a parsley-bed of diamonds at Bengal. The good man consented; a man-child was born. The other godfather was the Nabob of Arcot—and the new Christian's name is—Mahomet! What pity that Dr. Law was the godfather and not [the] Bishop of Hagedorn or your Metropolitan!

Mr. Jones, the orientalist, is candidate for Oxford. On Tuesday was se'nnight Mrs. Vesey[1] presented him to me. The next day he sent me an absurd and pedantic letter, desiring I would make interest for him. I answered it directly, and told him I had no more connection with Oxford than with the Antipodes, nor desired to have. I doubt I went a little further, and laughed at Dr. Blackstone, whom he quoted as an advocate for the rights of learning, and at some other passages in his letter. However, before I sent it, I inquired a little more about Mr. Jones, and on finding it was a circular letter sent to several, I did not think it necessary to answer it at all; and now I am glad I did not, for the man it seems is a staunch Whig, but very wrong-headed. He was tutor to Lord Althorp, and quarreled with Lord Spencer, who he insisted

[1] 'The Sylph,' whose Blue Stocking parties rivaled Mrs. Montagu's.

sisted should not interfere at all in the education of his own son.

There are just appeared three new *Epistles on History*, addressed to Mr. Gibbon by Mr. Hayley.[1] They are good poems, I believe, weight and measure, but except some handsome new similes, have little poetry and less spirit. In short, they are written by Judgement, who has set up for herself, forgetting that her business is to correct verses, and not to write them. Mr. Gibbon, I doubt, will not be quite pleased; for as the *Epistles* have certainly cost the author some pains, they were probably commenced before the historian's conversion to the court, and are a little too fond of liberty to charm the ear of a convert, which too the author wants to make him in another sense, and that will not please, unless he has swallowed his Majesty's professions as well as his pay.

In another new publication, called *Antiquities and Scenery in the North of Scotland*, I have found two remarkable passages, which intimate doubts of the antiquity of *Ossian*, though the author is a minister in Banff. The first, in p. 77, says, 'if only like a morning dream the visions of Ossian came in later days'. The other humbly begs to know, p. 81, how Fingal became possessed of burnished armour, when the times knew not the use of steel and iron.

My *quondam* friend, George Montagu, has left your friend Frederic five hundred pounds a year. I am very glad of it.

I have heard what I should not repeat, as I do not know that

[1] William Hayley (1745-1820), the poet, the friend and biographer of Cowper and Romney.

that it is true, but today I see it in the papers: in short, they say that the unfortunate Knight of the Polar Star[1] has disappeared. The reason given is that a demand of 300,000*l.* more for finishing the sumptuous edifice where Somerset House stood, having been made to the House of Commons, Mr. Brett, a member, begged to see an account of what had been already expended, and the next day all the telescopes in town could not descry the Swedish planet. I am sorry, considering that the constellation of the Adelphi was not *rayée* from the celestial globe after their bubble lottery. I suppose Ossian will keep his ground, and would, if Macpherson should please to maintain that he lived before Tubal.

Berkeley Square
May 19, 1780

Most part of this letter has been written many days: I waited for a proper conveyance. Now it comes to you in what Wedgewood calls a 'Druid's Mug,' you must drink out of it 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.'[2] Mr. Stonhewer gave men the direction, but I find it will not set out before Tuesday. However, I shall not be able to add to this volume, as I go to Strawberry to-morrow, and must leave it for the waggon. Sir Charles Hardy is dead suddenly. Lord Bathurst, I suppose, will have the command of the Fleet, as the senior *old Woman on the Staff*.

I shall settle at Strawberry on Tuesday se'nnight so if you have

[1] Sir William Chambers, the architect, created a Knight of the order by the King of Sweden in 1771.—T.
[2] The Opening line of Gray's ode, *The Bard*.

have a mind to hear from me you must write; for I shall know no more there than you in Yorkshire; and I cannot talk if nobody answers me. Somebody knocks, which is a very good conclusion when one has no more to say. Oh, it is Mr. Palgrave: well, he tells me that Sir William Chambers is not gone away, so I retract all, but that the Adams ought to be gone. Adieu!

98. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 62]

Berkeley Square
June 3, 1780

I know that a governor or a gazetteer ought not to desert their posts, if a town is besieged, or a town is full of news; and therefore, Madam, I resume my office. I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. Till I heard the Horse and Foot Guards were gone to their rescue, I expected nothing but some dire misfortune; and the first thing I heard this morning was that part of the town had had a fortunate escape from being burnt after ten last night. You must not expect order, Madam; I must recollect circumstances as they occur; and the best idea I can give your Ladyship of the tumult will be to relate it as I heard it.

I had come to town in the morning on a private occasion, and found it so much as I left it, that though I saw a few blue cockades

cockades here and there, I only took them for new recruits. Nobody came in; between seven and eight I saw a hack and another coach arrive at Lord Shelburne's, and thence concluded that Lord George Gordon's trumpet had brayed to no purpose. At eight I went to Gloucester House; the Duchess told me there had been a riot, and that Lord Mansfield's glasses had been broken, and a bishop's, but that most of the populace were dispersed. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived; and then we heard a much more alarming account. The concourse had been incredible, and had by no means obeyed the injunctions of their apostle, or rather had interpreted the spirit instead of the letter. The Duke had reached the House with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. There were the Lords Hillsborough, Stormont, Townshend, without their bags, and with their hair dishevelled about their ears, and Lord Willoughby without his periwig, and Lord Mansfield, whose glasses had been broken, quivering on the woolsack like an aspen. Lord Ashburnham had been torn out of his chariot, the Bishop of Lincoln ill-treated, the Duke of Northumberland had lost his watch in the holy hurly-burly, and Mr. Mackenzie his snuff-box and spectacles. Alarm came that the mob had thrown down Lord Boston, and were trampling him to death; which they almost did. They had diswigged Lord Bathurst on his answering them stoutly, and told him he was the Pope, and an old woman; thus splitting Pope Joan into two. Lord Hillsborough, on being taxed with negligence, affirmed that the Cabinet had the day before empowered

Lord George Gordon's Copy of *Scotland's Opposition to Popery*

powered Lord North to take precautions; but two Justices that were called denied having received any orders. Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the Duke's order to inquire what was doing in the other House; but though he was not suffered to pass he reasoned the mob into releasing him,—yet, he said, he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances.

About eight the Lords adjourned, and were suffered to go home; though the rioters declared that if the other House did not repeal the bill, there would at night be terrible mischief. Mr. Burke's name had been given out as the object of resentment. General Conway I knew would be intrepid and not give way; nor did he, but inspired the other House with his own resolution. Lord George Gordon was running backwards and forwards, from the windows of the Speaker's Chamber denouncing all that spoke against him to the mob in the lobby. Mr. Conway tasked him severely both in the House and aside, and Colonel Murray[1] told him he was a disgrace to his family. Still the members were besieged and locked up for four hours, nor could divide, as the lobby was crammed. Mr. Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish, with whom I supped afterwards, told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out swords in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.

Blue

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. James Murray, second son of Lord George Murray (The Pretender's General), and uncle of the Duke of Athol; M. P. for Perthshire; d. 1794.—T.

Blue banners had been waved from tops of houses at Whitehall as signals to the people, while the coaches passed, whom they should applaud or abuse. Sir George Savile's and Charles Turner's coaches were demolished. Ellis, whom they took for a Popish gentleman, they carried prisoner to the Guildhall in Westminster, and he escaped by a ladder out of a window. Lord Mahon harangued the people from the balcony of a coffee-house and begged them to retire; but at past ten a new scene opened. The mob forced the Sardinian minister's[1] chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gutted it. He saved nothing but two chalices; lost the silver lamps, &c., and the benches being tossed into the street, were food for a bonfire, with the blazing brands of which they set fire to the inside of the chapel, nor, till the Guards arrived, would suffer the engines to play. My cousin, T. Walpole, fetched poor Madam Cordon, who was ill, and guarded her in his house till three in the morning, when all was quiet.

Old Haslang's[2] chapel has undergone the same fate, all except the ordeal. They found stores of mass-books and run tea.

This is a slight and hasty sketch, Madam. On Tuesday the House of Commons is to consider the Popish laws. I forgot to tell you that the bishops not daring to appear, the Winchester bill, which had passed the Commons, was thrown out.

No saint was ever more diabolic than Lord George Gordon. Eleven wretches are in prison for the outrage at Cordon's and will

[1] The Marquis de Cordon.
[2] The Bavarian Envoy.

will be hanged instead of their arch-incendiary. One person seized is a Russian officer, who had the impudence to claim acquaintance with the Sardinian minister, and desired to be released. Cordon replied, 'Oui, Monsieur, je vous connoissois, mais je ne vous connois plus.' I do not know whether he is an associate of Thalestris, who seems to have snuffed a revolution in the wind.

I hear there are hopes of some temperament in Ireland. Somebody, I forget who, has observed that the English government pretends not to *quarter* soldiers in Ireland, and therefore must be glad of a bill. It is time some of our wounds should close; or, I believe, I shall soon have too much employment, instead of wanting materials for letters.

99. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[*Aetat* 62]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 27, 1780

I rejoice in your triumph, Madam, though I cannot partake of your fireworks. Not only had I ordered my books to be advertised, but I have a more melancholy cause that detains me. The letters that I have received to-day from Paris bid me be prepared to receive an account of my dear old friend's[1] death. I knew she had been very ill, but till these two last posts, I had been flattered that she was recovering. To-day her own secretary, and Mr. T. Walpole, pronounced that there are no

[1] Mme. du Deffand.

no hopes. I had sent James's powder, and had begged my cousin, if possible, to obtain her trying it—but alas! I knew France too well, and physicians too, and THEIR physicians still more, to have much hope of its being given; but it is too shocking to be told that the physician has laid aside all medicines, and yet would not suffer her to take it! When is it best to try it but in despair? and when, if not at eighty-four? He said it would vomit her, and kill her. Is not he killing her himself by trying nothing? and by not trying the powder in that case? This is a horrible thought, though she could not be immortal; and the terror I have been under for some time of her becoming deaf, added to blindness, had made me more reconciled to her great age, and to the probability of losing her. She retains, that is, did retain her senses, did not suffer, knew her situation, and was perfectly tranquil, and spoke little; but, by the whole description, she appears to me to have been almost worn out. I tremble for the next letter—though it is just as if I had already received it.—Another friend gone! I scarce have one left of above my own age. It is these memorandums that at the same time reconcile one to one's own departure. What can one expect but to survive one's friends if one lives long?—In this unhappy mood, Madam, I should be bad company. Can I care about elections? If an opponent's death could set Mr. Burke to moralizing on the hustings at Bristol, how must the loss of so dear a friend affect me! The savage physician exasperates me; what transport should I have felt, if I could have saved her, though but for six months! Perhaps I could not—I will not be unjust; it is probable that

I should not—but oh! not to let me try! It augments my abhorrence of physicians and professions. Long ago I said that the devil's three names, Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, were given to him in his three capacities of president of priests, lawyers, and physicians. I repeat it now with rancour: Beelzebub and Bouvard are synonymous terms in my lexicon. Five years ago I loved the wretch, for he saved her, as I thought, in my presence—did that give him a right over her life? Has not he cancelled my gratitude? Can one love and hate at once? I would if I could—yes, I do thank him for prolonging her life for five years—but oh! professions, professions! how *l'esprit du corps* absorbs all feelings!—and how prejudiced becomes principle! Dear old woman, she is now, I fear, no more!—I can write no more, Madam, for I can write on no other subject, and have no right to torment you with my concern. You shall hear no more of it. Nature takes care that hopeless griefs should not be permanent, and I have seen so much affectation of lamentation where little was felt, and I know so well that I have often felt most where I have discovered least, that I will profane my affection to my lost friend with no ostentation—much less to those who never knew her. I live enough in solitude to indulge all my sensations, without troubling others.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter I have had another shock,—General Conway has broken his arm! Lady Aylesbury assures me there is as little bad as there can be in such an accident, and that I shall hear again to-morrow. Still I shall go to him on Friday.

100. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 63]

Jan. 4, 1781

I return the Quipos, Madam, because if I retained them till I understand them, I fear you would never have them again. I should as soon be able to hold a dialogue with a rainbow, by the help of its grammar, a prism, for I have not yet discovered which is the first or last verse of four lines that hang like ropes of onions. Yet it is not for want of study, or want of respect for the Peruvian manner of writing. I perceive it is a very soft language, and, though at first I tangled the poem and spoiled the rhymes, yet I can conceive that a harlequin's jacket, artfully arranged by a princess of the blood of Mango Capac,[1] may contain a deep tragedy, and that a tawdry trimming may be a version of Solomon's Song. Nay, I can already say my alphabet of six colors, and know that each stands indiscriminately *but* for four letters, which gives the Peruvian a great advantage over the Hebrew tongue, in which the total want of vowels left every word at the mercy of the reader; and, though our salvation depended upon it, we did not know precisely what any word signified, till the invention of points, that were not used till the language had been obsolete for some thousands of years. A little uncertainty, as where one has but one letter instead of four, may give rise to many beauties. Puns must be greatly assisted by that ambiguity, and

[1] Manco Capac and Atahualpa (mentioned below) were the first and last Incas of Peru.—T.

and the delicacies of the language may depend on an almost imperceptible variation in the shades, as the perfection of the Chinese consists in possessing but very few syllables, each of which admits ten thousand accents, and thence pronunciation is the most difficult part of their literature.

At first sight, the resemblance of blue and green by candle-light seems to be an objection to the Peruvian; but any learned mercer might obviate that, by opposing indigo to grass-green, and ultra-marine to *verd de pomme*. The more expert one were at *nuances*, the more poetic one should be, or the more eloquent. A vermilion *A* must denote a weaker accent, or even passion, than one of carmine and crimson; and a straw-colour *U* be much more tender than one approaching to orange.

I have heard of a French perfumer who wrote an essay on the harmony of essences. Why should not that idea be extended? The Peruvian Quipos adapted a language to the eyes, rather than to the ears. Why should not there be one for the nose? The more the senses can be used indifferently for each other, the more our understandings would be enlarged. A rose, a jessamine, a pink, a jonquil, and a honeysuckle, might signify the vowels; the consonants to be represented by other flowers. The Cape jessamine, which has two smells, was born a diphthong. How charming it would be to smell an ode from a nosegay, and to scent one's handkerchief with a favourite song. Indeed, many improvements might be made on the Quipos themselves, especially as they might be worn, as well as perused. A trimming set on a new lute-string would be equivalent to a second edition with corrections. I

am

am only surprised that, in a country like Peru, where gold and silver thread were so cheap, there was no *clinquant* introduced into their poetry. In short, Madam, I am so pleased with the idea of knotting verses, which is vastly preferable to anagrams and acrostics, that if I were to begin life again, I would use a shuttle, instead of a pen, and write verses by the yard. As it is, I have not been idle; nay, like any heaven-born genius, I have begun to write before I can read; and, though I have not yet learned to decipher, I can at least cipher like Atahualpa himself. As a proof of my proficience, pray, Madam, construe the following colours:—

Brown, blue, white, yellow green yellow yellow white, red brown brown blue white.

As I was writing this last line, I received your Ladyship's interpretation of the verses. Whoever made them they are excellent, and it would have been cruel to deprive me of them till I could have unravelled them. Pray tell me who made them, for they are really good and sterling. I am sorry I expressed myself so awkwardly, that you thought I disapproved of the Quipos. On the contrary, you see how much they have amused me. In good truth, I was glad of anything that would occupy me, and turn my attention from all the horrors one hears or apprehends. I am sorry I have read the devastation of Barbadoes and Jamaica, &c., &c.; when one can do no good, can neither prevent nor redress, nor has any personal share, by oneself or one's friends, is it not excusable to steep one's attention in anything? I fear, Madam, you and Lord Ossory have a suffering friend: poor Mr. James, I hear, is totally ruined

ruined—his whole property swept away! There is another dreadful history, less known: the expedition sent against the Spanish settlements is cut off by the climate, and not a single being is left alive. The Duchess of Bedford told me last night that the poor soldiers were so averse, that they were driven to the march by the point of the bayonet, and that, besides the men, twenty-five officers have perished.

Lord Cornwallis and his tiny army are scarce in a more prosperous way. On this dismal canvas a fourth war is embroidered; and what, I think, threatens still more, the French administration is changed, and likely to be composed of more active men, and much more hostile to England. Our ruin seems to me inevitable. Nay, I know those who smile in the Drawing-room, that groan by their fireside: they own we have no more men to send to America, and think our credit almost as nearly exhausted. Can you wonder, then, Madam, if I am glad to play with Quipos—Oh, no! nor can I be sorry to be on the verge—does one wish to live to weep over the ruins of Carthage?

101. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 63]

Monday noon
Feb. 5, 1781

Perhaps you think, by my letters riding on the back of one another, that I am going to tell you of my Lord George Gordon. No, poor soul! he is at this minute in Westminster Hall, and I know nothing about him. Somehow or other I dare

dare to say the constitution will be brought in guilty, for Lord Mansfield is the judge. But I have other guess things to say to you: I have got your *Fresnoy;* it is a new proof of what I have long thought, that there is nothing you cannot do if you please. This is the best translation I ever saw; there have been disputes between literal and paraphrastic translations; and no wonder, for a third sort, the true, was not known; yours preserves the sense and substance of every sentence, but you make a new arrangement, and state and express the author's thought better than he could. Horace would have excused you if you had been simply familiar in a didactic poem, but you would not be so excused, nor allow yourself negligence in your poetry. You have exchanged the poverty of Fresnoy's Latin for Pope's rich English, and every epithet contributes its quota to every precept and develops it. This is in the style of none of your other works, and though more difficult, as masterly as any: in short, I have examined it with admiration, and only wonder how, with such powers and knowledge of the subject, you could confine yourself to the *matter* of the original. The shackles of translation have neither cramped your style, nor rendered it obscure; you have enriched your author without deviating, and improved his matter without adding to it, which is an achievement indeed. I do not flatter you; nay, you know I am frank enough upon most occasions, and were I porter of the Temple of Fame, I would not open the door to one of your babes, if it was not like you.

I think I shall soon compass a transcript at least of *Gray's Life*

shillings only equall'd the worth of one pound Sterling.
However we have a great deal of Sterling merit, & a
decent quantity of sober dullness
I believe I told you on my last, that Miss More had
made me very happy here for some days. This Letter
is to travell to London with her to save postage; for
the poor Letter will not be sensible of the merit of her
company; things destined to other nonsense, are ever
incapable to listen to sense & wit. I suppose Mrs Garrick
& she will spend some hours with you before they settle
at Hampton. I shall envy you & them, but I love you
all too much to put any malice into my sense
of your mutual felicity.
I was indeed much concern'd at the robbery committed
at Mr Burkes, but now you inform me it was done by
one who had been his Servant, I rejoyce he did not
murder us with as plunder them. The Demons of
Politicks committed a worse robbery on me when
he stole Mr Burke from me, then never was so pleasant, so instructive a companion & so amiable

Life by Demogorgon[1] for you. I saw him last night at Lady Lucan's, who has assembled a *blue stocking* meeting in imitation of Mrs. Vesey's Babels. It was so blue, it was quite Mazarine-blue. Mrs. Montagu kept aloof from Johnson, like the West from the East. There were Soame Jenyns, *Persian* Jones, Mr. Sherlocke, the new court with Mr. Courtenay, besides the out-pensioners of Parnassus. Mr. Wraxhall[2] was not—I wonder why, and so will he, for he is popping into every spot where he can make himself talked of, by talking of himself; but I hear he will come to an untimely beginning in the House of Commons.

I shall return your *Fresnoy* as soon as I have gone through it once more, that Sir Joshua may go to work. I have proposed a subject to him that he seems to like; *Little children brought to Christ*. He will not make them all brothers, like Albano's Cupids.

Pray look into the last *Critical Review* but one; there you will find that David Hume in a saucy blockheadly note calls Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Bishop Hoadly, *despicable writers*. I believe that ere long the Scotch will call the English *lousy!* and that Goody Hunter will broach the assertion in an anatomic lecture. Not content with debasing and disgracing us as a nation by losing America, destroying our Empire, and making us the scorn and prey of Europe, the Scotch would annihilate our patriots, martyrs, heroes, and geniuses. Algernon Sidney, Lord Russell, King William, the Duke of Marlborough

[1] Dr. Johnson.—T.
[2] Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751-1831), the memoir writer.—T.

Marlborough, Locke, are to be traduced and levelled, and with the aid of their fellow-labourer Johnson, who spits at them while he tugs at the same oar, Milton, Addison, Prior and Gray are to make way for the dull forgeries of Ossian, and such wights as Davy,[1] and Johnny Home,[2] Lord Kames,[3] Lord Monboddo,[4] and Adam Smith![5] Oh, if you have a drop of English ink in your veins, rouse and revenge your country! Do not let us be run down and brazened out of all our virtue, genius, sense, and taste, by Laplanders and Boeotians, who never produced one original writer in verse or prose.

Tuesday morning

My servants tell me, for I have yet seen nobody else to-day, that Lord George was acquitted at five this morning—a wise manoeuvre truly has been made; they punish him severely for eight months, and cannot convict him! now he will be a confessor. I must finish, for I have just heard that Lady Orford[6] is dead, and must write to my family and order mourning, &c. I doubt this letter is no retaining fee to Mr. Palgrave. The

[1] Charles Davy (1722-1797), miscellaneous writer who published, among other solemn works, *Conjectural Observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetical Writing.*

[2] John Home (1722-1808), author of *Douglas, Siege of Aquilea* and many even worse plays. He was secretary to Lord Bute and tutor to the Prince of Wales.

[3] Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782). Scottish judge and author who attacked Hume.

[4] James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1744-1799). He was the friend of Johnson and Boswell and was chiefly celebrated for his *Ancient Metaphysics,* in which he asserted his belief in a race of men with tails.

[5] The author of *The Wealth of Nations.*

[6] Margaret Rolle, Countess of Orford, widow of Horace Walpole's eldest brother. She died at Pisa on Jan. 13, 1781, aged seventy-one.—T. She was profligate and unprincipled, and Walpole detested her.

102. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 63]

Berkeley Square
Feb. 9, 1781

The lost sheep is found; but I have more joy in one just person than in ninety and nine sinners that do not repent; in short, the renegade Gibbon is returned to me, after ten or eleven weeks, and pleads having been five of them at Bath. I immediately forgave even his return; yet pray do not imagine that I write to announce this recovery; no! it is to impart what he told me. He says that somebody asked Johnson if he was not afraid that *you* would resent the freedoms he has taken with Gray, 'No, no, Sir; Mr. Mason does not like rough handling.' I hope in the Muses that you will let him see which had most reason to fear rough handling. The saucy Caliban! I don't know when I shall get you his blubber,[1] but I have sent again to my bookseller about it.

I have restored your *Fresnoy* with regret. The more I have studied it the better I like it—it will always be standard. I repeat that there is the precise sense of every sentence, and yet they are not translated. They are like the same pair of legs, before being taught to dance and afterwards. Fresnoy gives the precepts, and you tell him how to state and enounce them. As I have ambition of appertaining to your poem, I humbly beg leave to amend one word, in a certain line towards the end; for

'Sons of her choice and sharers of her fire,'

read 'partners.'

You

[1] Johnson's *Life of Gray*.—T.

You will laugh, especially after my last letter, when I tell you that I am chosen honorary member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. I received the notification since I began this letter. Lord Buchan, the founder (under the patronage of Saint Bute), was many years ago a little my acquaintance; I have not even seen him at least these dozen years, nor ever had any correspondence with him but once, about two years ago, when he wrote to ask me what portraits of Scottish kings or queens I knew of in England. It is impossible to have less respect than I have for Societies of Antiquaries, who seldom do anything but grow antiquated themselves. However, as an honorary title exacts neither function nor *vote*, I have accepted it civilly, especially as it will show contempt for our own fools, from amongst whom I scratched out my name. However, I conceive that the bones of my memory may some time or other be dug up and burned at Edinburgh, as Peter Martyr's were at Oxford.

My new dignity of F. S. S. A. will not comport with amusing Mr. Palgrave to-day. I have taken an oath on Ossian to have no imagination, no invention; for forgeries are *in*tentions, not in*ven*tions. Still I shall not wear my new plaid robes and blue bonnet beyond my inauguration week, and shall soon relapse into a South Briton; though if I should say *The* 15, *The* 45, you will remember my connection north of the Tweed.

P. S. Is not it droll that I, who never sought for, canvassed for, or received any mark of distinction in my days, should receive a compliment from Edinburgh?

It

103. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 63]

Monday night, Feb. 19, 1781

It has not been from want of materials, if I had chosen to work them up, that I have not written to you very lately; but though I hold it delectable enough in one's dotage to prattle and gossip of the doings of the courts of one's younger days, I do not think it so decorous to invert one's Brantôme-hood and limp after and repeat the tattle of Drawing-rooms that are scarce fledged. A sovereign may be philosopher or concentrated enough in his own rays to disregard terrestrial tempests, and to be more occupied by the spots in his own orbit than by the mouldering away of his empire. For my part I have too much mortal clay about me to soar so much above matter, and to divert myself only with the music or discord of the spheres.

All this tedious proem is but to say that I have not wanted news, ay, and news that employs this whole town, if I would have condescended to tell you who has or who has not been at Cumberland House, or at the Queen's ball, or how King George and his brother, Duke Henry, have quarrelled about the servants of the Prince of Wales not being suffered to dine with his Royal Highness Duke Henry, and how Duke Henry was not invited to the ball at the Queen's House, with a deal of such scimble scamble stuff, which has totally obliterated the memory of all the wars that we have with all the world. Do not

not be surprised; if we attended to anything above such puerilities, we should not be in the situation we are. I still do believe that distress will at last open our eyes, but I believe, too, that we shall soon shut them again. There is not energy enough left in us to produce any effect. One may judge from the *nature* of our dissipations as much as from the dissipation itself. The age that souses into every amusement and folly that is presented to it, has not imagination enough to strike out anything of itself. Mrs. Cornelys, Almack, and Dr. Graham are forced to advertise diversions by public sale, and everybody goes indolently and mechanically to them all, without choice or preference. They who are *called the people of fashion* or the *ton* have contributed nothing of their own but *being too late;* nay, actually do go to most public diversions after they are over. Your Yorkshire reformers, though not content with Mr. Burke's bill, will gather no prophetic comfort from the treatment it received to-day. I was at Mrs. Delany's this evening, when Mr. Frederic Montagu arrived from the House. They had put off the second reading till Friday, because Wednesday is the Fast Day, and Thursday Vestris's benefit. God has His day, a French dancer his, and then the national senate will be at leisure to think whether it will save three-halfpence-farthing out of eighteen millions that are to be raised in hopes of protracting the war, till we want at least eighteen millions more.

Was not you edified with the last *Gazette?* When we expected to hear that all Washington's army was catched in a drag-net

A Contemporary Print from Walpole's Collection

drag-net, and that Lord Cornwallis had subdued and pacified all Virginia and Carolina, we were modestly told that his Lordship and his handful of men had been sick, but, thank you, are a little better; and that Colonel Ferguson was beaten, and Colonel Tarleton had had a puny advantage; all which we knew two months ago.

To-day we are very sorry for what however we do not care a straw about. Well, the grand fleet, that was to fetch home Gibraltar and place it out of harm's way in the Isle of Sky, cannot sail. Governor Johnstone, the honestest man in the world, has written to Lord Hillsborough (for he would not trust Lord Sandwich, whom a fortnight ago he thought the second man in honesty in *South* Britain) complaining that the fleet is rotten, and cannot sail; nay, he has sent up a yard and a half of worm-eaten plank, which he humbly begs his Majesty himself will taste and be convinced. I do not answer for a syllable of truth in this narrative, though it was told me by a Scottish Earl who never gave a vote in his days against any court.

I have not yet been able to get you *Gray's Life*. My bookseller had blundered, and after trusting to him so long, he brought me the preceding volumes: but I am on a new scent, and hope at least to send you a transcript of that single *Life;* though I wish you to see the whole set, nay, those old ones; I dipped into them, and found that the tasteless pedant[1] admires that wretched buffoon Dr. King, who is but a Tom Brown in rhyme; and says that *The Dispensary*, that *chef-d'oeuvre*, can scarce

[1] Dr. Johnson.

scarce make itself read. This is prejudice on both sides, equal to that monkish railer Père Garasse. But Dr. Johnson has indubitably neither taste nor ear, criterion of judgement, but his old woman's prejudices; where they are wanting, he has no rule at all; he prefers Smith's poetic, but insipid and undramatic *Phaedra and Hippolitus* to Racine's *Phèdre*, the finest tragedy in my opinion of the French theatre, for, with Voltaire's leave, I think it infinitely preferable to *Iphigénie*, and so I own I do *Britannicus*, *Mahomet*, *Alzire*, and some others; but I will allow Johnson to dislike Gray, Garth, Prior—ay, and every genius we have had, when he cries up Blackmore, Thomson, Akenside, and Dr. King; nay, I am glad that the measure of our dullness is full. I would have this era stigmatize itself in every respect, and be a proverb to the nations around, and to future ages. We want but Popery to sanctify every act of blindness. Hume should burn the works of Locke, and Johnson of Milton, and the atheist and the bigot join in the same religious rites, as they both were pensioned by the same piety. Oh, let us not have a ray of sense or throb of sensation left to distinguish us from brutes! let total stupefaction palliate our fall, and let us resemble the Jews, who when they were to elect a god, preferred a calf!

Tuesday

Upon stricter inquiry, I find that Johnson has not yet published his new *Lives*, but only given away a few copies.

An account is said to be come from New York, that above two thousand of Washington's army have left him for want of

of pay, but, remain encamped at some distance; have refused to join Clinton, and have sent to the Congress that they will return to Washington if they are paid; if not, that they will not disband. Governor Johnstone's remonstrance is already whittled down to a complaint of one particular ship not being ready.

2nd P. S. Lord Harcourt has got me from Taylor at Bath the method of the aquatinta, which I have sent to Mr. Stonhewer this morning to transmit to him.

104. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 63]

Berkeley Square
March 3, 1781

I began to be a little out of humour at your silence; your letter came in time, just as I was going to seal up my lips too. An echo that will repeat one word twenty times will stop, unless you feed it anew, though but with a single word. This time, no more than the echo, had I any need to lift up my voice.

The war is gone to sleep, the Parliament gone to bed, and Vestris himself,[1] if he had any competitor, would go out of fashion. Invention, except of political lies, is not the gift of

[1] 'Just as I had finished my letter, I learned the dreadful calamity that happened at the Opera House last night. The theatre was brimful in expectation of Vestris. At the end of the second act he appeared; but with so much grace, agility, and strength that the whole audience fell into convulsions of applause: the men thundered; the ladies, forgetting their delicacy and weakness, clapped with such vehemence that seventeen broke their arms, sixty-nine sprained their wrists, and three cried bravo! bravissimo! so rashly, that they have not been able to utter so much as *no* since, any more than both Houses of Parliament.'—Letter to Lady Ossory, Dec. 17, 1780.

of this age. For want of subject of admiration, Sir Joseph Yorke is called by the newspapers a great man, and for want of taste the Monthly Reviewers call Mr. Hayley a great poet, though he has no more ear or imagination than they have. As if anybody loved reading, or did read, Mr. Gibbon has treated them with his vast two volumes. I have almost finished the last, and some parts are more entertaining than the other, and yet it has tired me, and so I think it did himself. There is no spirit in it, nor does any one chapter interest one more than another; which is commonly the case of compilations, especially in such an eloquent age as this. Though these volumes are not polished like the first, you see that he is never thinking of his subject, but intending to make his periods worthy of himself. Then he is often obscure, for from the prodigious quantity of matter he frequently is content with alluding to his original; and who for mercy would recur to Sozomen, Jornandez, and Procopius? Then having both the Eastern and Western empires on his hands at once, and nobody but *imbécilles* and their eunuchs at the head, one is confused with two subjects, that are quite alike, though quite distinct; and in the midst of this distraction enters a deluge of Alans, Huns, Goths, Ostrogoths, and Visigoths, who with the same features and characters are to be described in different terms, without any essential variety, and he is to bring you acquainted with them when you wish them all at the bottom of the Red Sea. He has made me a present of these volumes, and I am sure I shall have fully paid for them when I have finished them: one paragraph I must

must select, which I believe the author did not intend should be so applicable to the present moment. 'The Armorican provinces of Gaul and the greatest part of Spain were thrown into a state of disorderly independence by the confederations of the Bagaudæ; and the imperial ministers pursued with proscriptive laws and ineffectual arms the rebels whom they had made.' End of chap. XXXV. This is also a sample of the style which is translating bad Latin into English, that may be turned into classic Latin. I was charmed, as I owned, with the enamel of the first volume, but I am tired by this rhetoric diction, and wish again for Bishop Burnet's *And so.*

They who write of their own times love or hate the actors, and draw you to their party; but with the fear of the *laws* of history before his eyes, a compiler affects you no more than a Chancery suit about the entail of an estate with whose owners you was not acquainted. Poor Lord Lyttelton was of all that tribe the most circumspect, and consequently the most insipid. His *Henry II* raises no more passions than Burn's *Justice of Peace.* Apropos, '*poor Lyttelton*' were the words of offence. Mrs. Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any altercation, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure, that she would never ask him to dinner again. I took her side, and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtaroth scold in Coptic.

I am happy that you like Mr. Conway's speech, and the *Concio ad Clerum.*[1] The Duke of Grafton, with whom I dined the other day with Mr. Conway and Stonhewer told us that the Flamen most offended is Bishop Keene. I do believe he is one of the most sore, for he is one of the most putrid; but he must be ten times more angry at his own son, who spoke on Monday *for* Burke's bill. Lord Chatham's second son,[2] they say, was far more like *his* father. Sheridan demolished Courtenay, who, old George Cavendish said well, is deputy buffoon to Lord North.

I am sorry you have lost Palgrave, and wish you could tempt him to meet you at Strawberry Hill.

Sir Joshua, I doubt, will not have time soon to expedite your *Fresnoy;* it must be much altered, or I should marvel at Gray;[3] for Bishop Hurd you know I never admired him, even before he was mitred. All his writings are tame, without a grain of originality. I shall always maintain that you have made a masterly poem from a very moderate one, without adding to the author's sense. If that is not the perfection of translation, I do not know what is. I am very sensible that you could have added more gold, but who ever gilt so well? This I take to be the precise definition of a good translation, which improves base metal without adding ore. Adieu.

I

[1] Apparently some remarks addressed to the bishops in Conway's recently published speech.—T.

[2] William Pitt the younger entered Parliament as member for Appleby in Jan. 1781. 'He made his first speech on 26 Feb. in support of Burke's bill for economical reform. The House expected much of Chatham's son, and was not disappointed. Perfectly at his ease, and in a voice full of melody and force, he set forth his opinions in well-ordered succession and in the best possible words.' (D.N.B.)—T.

[3] Gray and Hurd tried to dissuade Mason from translating Fresnoy's poem.—T.

105. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 63]

May 22, 1781

I am pleased that you think seriously of making me a visit soon, but you might have retrenched the comfort you hold out of its being a very short one. As you come as seldom as a comet, I should not have been alarmed, if you intended to stay as long. My publication [1] shall certainly not precede your arrival. I can scarce even call that delay a compliment, having already suspended its appearance. In short, my advertisement prevented the spurious editions, and I flatter myself I am forgotten; at least I have gained time, and at worst will publish in July or August, when all the world is dispersed, and I can trust the fickleness of the age for not recollecting in winter what passed after the prodigious interval of three months. Should any national calamity happen, no incredible event, I will turn the ill wind to private good, and steal out, while the consternation lasts.

Your objection to the play I allow to be fully just, and I know fifty others, but don't imagine I will correct anything; no, that would show predilection and partiality to it; partiality I have, but it is to your corrections, and it shall have none other; I have said the truth. I think your alterations marvellous, and it is favourable to the tragedy, that it could produce your alterations and Lady Di's drawings; you shall have the full honours of yours, for, first or last, they shall stand by themselves

[1] The second edition of *The Mysterious Mother*.

themselves in your name.[1] I have no jealousy; I allow you full superiority, and will always avow it, and have more pleasure in the fame of my friends than appetite for it myself. As to *The Mysterious Mother* being acted I am perfectly secure, at least while Lord Hertford is Lord Chamberlain; nay, whoever should succeed him I think would not license it without my consent; but enough on a subject of which I am sick and weary, and yet I have nothing to replace it.

It was not from me, I assure you, that you have received any defence of Milton, nor do I know anything of it, but what you tell me, that it is in the *Memoirs* of Hollis. Boswell, that quintessence of busybodies, called on me last week, and was let in, which he should not have been, could I have foreseen it. After tapping many topics, to which I made as dry answers as an unbribed oracle, he vented his errand. 'Had I seen Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets?*' I said, slightly, 'No, not yet'; and so overlaid his whole impertinence. As soon as he could recover himself, with Caledonian sincerity, he talked of Macklin's new play, and pretended to like it, which would almost make one suspect that he knows a dose of poison has already been administered; though, by the way, I hear there is little good in the piece, except the likeness of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scots.

You will find that I have gotten a new idol—in a word, a successor to Rosette, and almost as great a favourite; nor is this a breach of vows and constancy, but an act of piety. In a word, my poor dear old friend Madame du Deffand had a little dog of

[1] These alterations were first published by Mr. Montagu Somers in 1924.

of which she was extremely fond, and the last time I saw her she made me promise, if I should survive her, to take charge of it. I did. It is arrived, and I was going to say, it is incredible how fond I am of it, but I have no occasion to brag of my dogmanity. I dined at Richmond House t'other day, and mentioning whither I was going, the Duke said 'Own the truth, shall not you call at home first and see Tonton?' He guessed rightly. He is now sitting on my paper as I write—not the Duke, but Tonton.

I know no public matters but what the newspapers tell you as well as me. Darby is come home, but Gibraltar is in a manner destroyed by the Spanish bombs. The Dutch fleet is hovering about, but it is a pickpocket war, and not a martial one, and I never attend to petty larceny. Adieu!

106. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 64]

Strawberry Hill
Oct. 7, 1781

I beg your Ladyship's pardon for not returning the History of Fotheringay, which I now enclose.

The new Veres has been returned to England these six weeks, and I visited them at their palace (as it really was of Henry VIII) at Hanworth not long after their arrival. All their near kin have done so too, and *tout s'est passé comme si de rien n'étoit.* Their fellow traveller is left behind. We live in such an awkward unfashionable nook here, that we have not yet heard

heard Lord Vere's will, nor know whether Lord Richard Cavendish is dead or alive. *I* am so much awkwarder still, and treasure up scandal so little, that, though I heard the Brightelmstone story, I have quite forgotten who the principal personage was—so you will not fear my repeating it. I do not design to know a circumstance about Admiral Rodney and Admiral Fergusson. We are to appearance at war with half Europe and a quarter of America, and yet our warfare is only fending and proving, and is fitter for the Quarter Sessions than for history. It costs us seventeen or eighteen millions a year to inquire whether our Generals and Admirals are rogues or fools; and, since most of them are only one or t'other, I would not give half a crown to know which. The nation is such an oaf as to amuse itself with these foolish discussions, and does not perceive that six years and above forty millions, and half our territories, have been thrown away in such idle pastime. How the grim heroes of Edward III and Henry V would stare at hearing that this is our way of making war on France!

The night I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, I was robbed—and, as if I were a sovereign or a nation, have had a discussion ever since whether it was not a *neighbour* who robbed me—and should it come to the ears of the newspapers, it might produce as ingenious a controversy amongst our anonymous wits as any of the noble topics I have been mentioning. *Voici le fait.* Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose at seven o'clock. The evening was very dark. In the close lane under her park-pale, and

and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure on horseback pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so I found did Lady Browne, for she was speaking and stopped. To divert her fears, I was just going to say, 'Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess?' when I heard a voice cry 'Stop!' and the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind, before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my waistcoat under my arm. He said, 'Your purse and watches!' I replied, 'I have no watch.' 'Then your purse!' I gave it to him; it had nine guineas. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said, 'Don't be frightened; I will not hurt you.' I said, 'No; you won't frighten the lady?' He replied, 'No; I give you my word I will do you no hurt.' Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch, but he said, 'I am much obliged to you! I wish you good night!' pulled off his hat, and rode away. 'Well?' said I, 'Lady Browne, you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for you see there is nothing in it.' 'Oh, but I am,' said she, 'and now I am in terrors lest he should return, for I have given him a purse with only bad money that I carry on purpose.' 'He certainly will not open it directly,' said I, 'and at worst he can only wait for us at our return; but I will send my servant back for a horse and a blunderbuss,' which I did. The next distress was not to terrify the Duchess, who is so paralytic and nervous. I therefore made Lady Browne go into the parlour, and

and desired one of the Duchess's servants to get her a glass of water, while I went into the drawing-room to break it to the Duchess. 'Well,' said I, laughing to her and the rest of the company, 'you won't get much from us to-night.' 'Why,' said one of them, 'have you been robbed?' 'Yes, a little,' said I. The Duchess trembled; but it went off. Her groom of the chambers said not a word, but slipped out, and Lady Margaret and Miss Howe having servants there on horseback, he gave them pistols and dispatched them different ways. This was exceedingly clever, for he knew the Duchess would not have suffered it, as lately he had detected a man who had robbed her garden, and she would not allow him to take up the fellow. These servants spread the story, and when my footman arrived on foot, he was stopped in the street by the hostler of the 'George', who told him the highwayman's horse was then in the stable; but this part I must reserve for the second volume, for I have made this no story so long and so tedious that your Ladyship will not be able to read it in a breath; and the second part is so much longer and so much less, contains so many examinations of witnesses, so many contradictions in the depositions, which I have taken myself, and, I must confess, with such abilities and shrewdness that I have found out nothing at all, that I think to defer the prosecution of my narrative till all the other inquisitions on the anvil are liquidated, lest your Ladyship's head, strong as it is, should be confounded, and you should imagine that Rodney or Ferguson was the person who robbed us in Twickenham Lane. I would not have detailed

detailed the story at all if you were not in a forest, where it will serve to put you to sleep as well as a newspaper full of lies; and I am sure there is as much dignity in it as in the combined fleet, and ours popping in and out alternately, like a man and woman in a weather-house.

107. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway

[*Aetat* 64]

Berkeley Square
Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781

I have been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have anything more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room and acquainted with half the company. *The Count of Narbonne*[1] was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Younge has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

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[1] By Robert Jephson. It was a dramatization of *The Castle of Otranto.*

108. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 64]

Berkeley Square
Nov. 26, 1781, late at night

I came to town to-day at two o'clock, and found the town in a hubbub on the news of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army being made prisoners; but the Speech and two majorities to-morrow will send them all easy again to the opera by night.

I cannot tell you a word more of this mishap than Mr. Stonhewer has told you, whom I met this evening at Lady Cecilia's and who has written to you. Mr. Macpherson, who publishes our daily creed, has been proclaiming that Lord Cornwallis has vowed he would never pile up his arms like Burgoyne. I do not know whether this was to keep up our spirits or not, but it puts the hero in a ridiculous light, which is the way in which heroes are treated of late, when they can be no longer of use; it saves rewards.

I have heard nothing else, nor was this repetition worth sending, but it proves I am not negligent.

I have been plagued about Mr. Jephson's play—nay, I am so still, for though I did prevail on Mr. Harris to act it, who had been ill-used about it, and on Miss Younge to play the mother, which she has done to admiration; and though it has succeeded perfectly, the author is dissatisfied. I had four sides last week, and to-night another letter of eight pages, to scold me for letting the statue on the tomb be cumbent instead of

A Contemporary Print from Walpole's Collection

of erect. In short, I do not wonder he is a poet, for he is distracted: he shall act his next play himself for me.

When you come to town I can show you a thousand curious things, from Madame du Deffand's papers, but I believe I did mention them before. When one repeats oneself, it is plain one grows old, or has nothing to say.

109. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 64]

[1782?]

I have been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny, of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and, therefore, I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets: but do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, etc., etc., under every possible aspect

aspect. In short, I have longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art.

But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phenomena. If I was as good a poet as you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly.—And then Saturn's belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles; but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for.

Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan; and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their everything quadrupled—which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his *Gulliver*. How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of piercers! or four! and how much longer the honeymoon would last, if both the

the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the passions, and four times the means of gratifying them!

I have opened new worlds to you.—You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton and equal to Shakespeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear, indecency, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose.—But I will not dictate. The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made something of the idea, even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten anybody from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time in a genteel dialogue. Good night! I am going to bed.—Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

110. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Aetat* 64]

Berkeley Square
June 25, 1782

I find there is a correspondence commenced between you and Mr. Hayley by the Parnassus post.[1] I did not know you were acquainted; I suppose you met at Calliope's: if you love incense, he

[1] Hayley had published *An Essay on Epic Poetry, in Five Epistles, to the Rev. Mr. Mason.*—T.

he has fumigated you like a flitch of bacon. However, I hope in the Lord Phoebus that you will not take his advice any more than Pope did that of such another sing-song warbler, Lord Lyttelton; nor be persuaded to write an epic poem (that most senseless of all the species of poetic composition, and which pedants call the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the human mind); well, you may frown, as in duty bound, yet I shall say what I list.

Epic poetry is the art of being as long as possible in telling an uninteresting story; and an epic poem is a mixture of history without truth, and of romance without imagination. We are well off when from that *mesalliance* there spring some bastards called episodes, that are lucky enough to resemble their romantic mother, more than their solemn father. So far from epic poetry being at the head of composition, I am persuaded that the reason why so exceedingly few have succeeded is from the absurdity of the species. When nothing has been impossible to genius in every other walk, why has everybody failed in this but the inventor, Homer? You will stare, but what are the rest? Virgil, with every beauty of expression and harmony that can be conceived, has accomplished but an insipid imitation. His hero is a nullity, like Mellefont [1] and the virtuous characters of every comedy, and some of his incidents, as the harpies and the ships turned to nymphs, as silly as Mother Goose's Tales. Milton, all imagination, and a thousand times more sublime and spirited, has produced a monster. Lucan, who often says more in half a line than Virgil in a whole book, was lost in bombast if he talked for thirty lines together. Claudian

[1] A character in Congreve's *Double Dealer*.—T.

William Hayley, by Romney

Claudian and Statius had all his fustian with none of his quintessence. Camoens had more true grandeur than they, but with grosser faults. Dante was extravagant, absurd, disgusting, in short, a Methodist parson in Bedlam. Ariosto was a more agreeable Amadis de Gaul in a bawdy-house, and Spenser, John Bunyan in rhyme. Tasso wearies one with their insuperable crime of stanza and by a thousand puerilities that are the very opposite of that dull dignity which is demanded for epic: and Voltaire, who retained his good sense in heroics, lost his spirit and fire in them. In short, epic poetry is like what it first celebrated, the heroes of a world that knew nothing better than courage and conquest. It is not suited to an improved and polished state of things. It has continued to degenerate from the founder of the family, and happily expired in the last bastard of the race, Ossian.

Still, as Mr. Hayley has allowed such a latitude to heroic poesy as to admit the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and *The Dunciad* as epic poems, I can forgive a man who recommends to a friend to pen a tragedy when he will accept of *The Way of the World* as one.

For Mr. Hayley himself, though he chants in good tune, and has now and then pretty lines amongst several both prosaic and obscure, he has, I think, no genius, no fire, and not a grain of *originality*, the first of merits (in my eyes) in these latter ages, and a more certain mark of genius than in the infancy of the world, when no ground was broken, nor even, in the sportsman's phrase, *foiled*. It is that originality that I admire in your *Heroic Epistle* and in your genuine style, which

which, I trust, you will not quit to satisfy the impartial Mr. Hayley (who, though a good patriot, equally cherishes janizaries)

> That to you *do not belong*
> *The beauties of envenomed song.*

For writing an epic poem, it would be as wise to set about copying Noah's ark, if Mons. de Buffon should beg you to build a menagerie for a couple of every living creatures upon earth, when there is no longer any danger of a general inundation.

I doubt your new friend will write his readers and his own reputation to death; every poem has a train of prose as long as Cheapside, with a vast parade of reading that would be less dear if it had any novelty or vivacity to recommend it. I know as little new as he, except that Lord Rockingham is very ill. I believe not without danger; should he fall, there would be a new scene indeed! Adieu!

P. S. I find I have said above, every living *creatures:* is not that bad English? and if it is, is not it better—than *a couple of every living creature?*

111. To Earl Harcourt

[*Aetat* 64]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 7, 1782

I am most impatient, my dear Lord, for an account of the conclusion of all the various and great works carrying on at Nuneham

Nuneham. I am earnest to hear that the house is finished, that the tower designed by Mr. Mason is ready to receive my painted glass, that he has written several novelties, and is coming to make me a visit as he promised, and that Lady Harcourt has settled, and had transcribed the MS. that I am to print. These things, and perhaps a great many more, I conclude, have been pursued with unremitting diligence, as no soul has had a moment's time to send me a line; though Mr. Mason is so punctual a correspondent, that I know he would not have been so long silent, if he had not been so occupied by the works at Nuneham, which he knows, I prefer to my own satisfaction. However, as all must be terminated in two or three days, I beg that the first holiday after the masons, bricklayers, upholsterers, muses, and amanuenses are paid off, that somebody or other will tell me the society are well, and have not broke their necks off a scaffold, nor their bones by a fall from Pegasus.

By my little specimen in Strawberry, I guess that Nuneham is in the highest beauty. As a whole, summer has been spent on decorating autumn with verdure, leaves, and rivers. Your Lordship's Thames must be brimful. I never saw it such a Ganges at this time of year: it is none of your home-brewed rivers that people make with a drain, half a bridge, and a clump of evergreens, and then overlay with the model of a ship.

I know nothing, for I live as if I were just arrived from Syria, and were performing quarantine. Nobody dares stir out of their own house. We are robbed and murdered if we do but step over the threshold to the chandler's shop for a pennyworth of plums. Lady Margaret Mordaunt is at Petersham with

with Lady Cecilia, and they are to dine here next week, if Admiral Millbank is returned from the Baltic, and they can obtain a convoy. Dame Cliveden [1] is the only heroine amongst all us old dowagers: she is so much recovered that she ventures to go out cruising on all the neighbours, and has made a miraculous draught of fishes.

My nieces [2] are gone to Hackwood, and thence are to meet their sister and Lord Chewton at Weymouth. I have heard a whisper of a little miscarriage: it must have been a very small one. The Duchess,[3] when I heard last, was at Lausanne, but going to Geneva, and intended a visit to Madame de Virri, who is within three hours of the former. I do not know whither bound next.

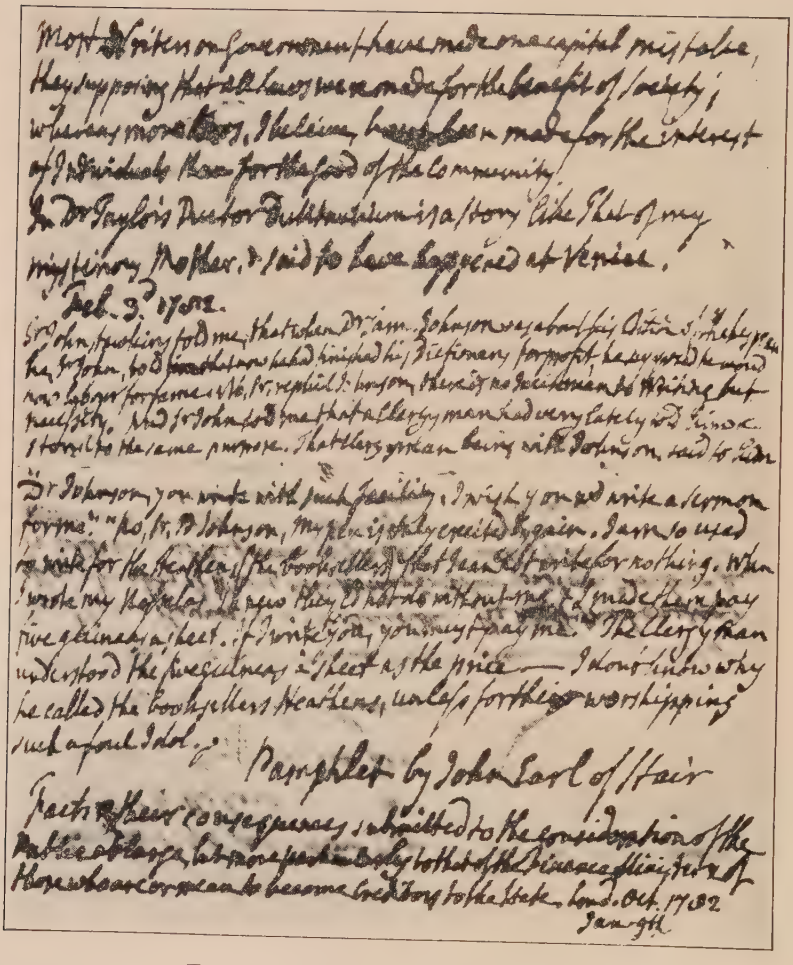
Has your Lordship seen Mr. Tyrwhitt's book in answer to Mr. Bryant and Dr. Archimage? It is as good as arguments and proofs can be after what is much better, wit and ridicule. As Mr. Mason is absorbed in Fresnoy and Associations, I conclude he does not condescend to look at such trifles as Archaelogic Epistles, and dissertations on the language of Chaucer.

Charles Fox is languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson.[4] George Selwyn says, 'Who should *the man of the people* live with, but with *the woman of the people?*' Tonton sends his compliments to Druid, and I am the whole sacred grove's devoted

H. W.

I

[1] Mrs. Clive, the actress.
[2] The Ladies Waldegrave of Sir Joshua's famous picture.
[3] The Duchess of Gloucester.—T.
[4] Mrs. Mary Robinson, the actress, known as 'Perdita.'



Two Pages from a Common-Place Book

112. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat 65*]

Nov. 5, 1782

I beg your Ladyship's pardon, but I cannot refrain from sending you a codicil to my last. I have taken to astronomy, now the scale is enlarged enough to satisfy my taste, who love gigantic ideas—do not be afraid; I am not going to write a second part to *The Castle of Otranto,* nor another account of the Patagonians who inhabit the new Brobdingnag planet; though I do not believe that a world 160 times bigger than ours is inhabited by pigmies—they would do very well for our page, the moon.

I have been reading Lord Buchan's letter again. He tells me that Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, at Bath, says that the new planet's orbit is eighty of our years. Now, if their days are in proportion to their year, as our days are to our year, a day in the new planet must contain 1920 hours; and yet, I dare to say, some of the inhabitants complain of the shortness of the days. I may err in my calculation for I am a woful arithmetician, and never could learn my multiplication table; but no matter, one large sum is as good as another. How one should smile to hear the Duchess of Devonshire of the new planet cry, 'Lord! you would not go to dinner yet, sure! it is but fifteen hundred o'clock!' or some Miss,—'Ah! that superannuated old fright, I'll lay a wager she's a year old.' But stay; here I don't go by my own rule of proportion, I ought to suppose their lives adequate to their size. Well, any way, one might build very entertaining hypotheses on this new discovery.

The

The planet's distance from the sun is 1,710,000,000 of miles —I revere a telescope's eyes that can see so far! What pity that no Newton should have thought of improving instruments for hearing too! If a glass can penetrate 1,710,000,000 miles beyond the sun, how easy to form a trumpet like Sir Joshua Reynolds's, by which one might overhear what is said in Mercury and Venus, that are within a stone's-throw of us! Well, such things will be discovered—but alas! we live in such an early age of the world, that nothing is brought to any perfection! I don't doubt but there will be invented spying-glasses for seeing the thoughts—and then a new kind of stucco for concealing them; but I return to my new favourite, astronomy. Do but think, Madam, how fortunate it is for us that discoveries are not reciprocal. If our superiors of the great planets were to dabble in such minute researches as we make by microscopes, how with their infinitely greater facilities, they might destroy us for a morning's amusement! They might impale our little globe on a pin's point, as we do a flea, and take the current of the Ganges or Oroonoko for the circulation of our blood—for with all due respect for philosophy of all sorts, I humbly apprehend that when people wade beyond their sphere, they make egregious blunders—at least we do, who are not accustomed to them. I am so vulgar, that when I hear of 17,000,000 of miles, I fancy astronomers compute by livres like the French, and not by pounds sterling—I mean, not by miles sterling. Nay, as it is but two days that I have grown wise, I have another whim. I took it into my head last night that our antediluvian ancestors, who are said to have lived many hundred years, were not inhabitants

inhabitants of this earth but of the new planet, whence might come the account which we believe came from heaven. Whatever came from the skies, where the new planet lives, would, in the apprehension of men at that time, be deemed to come from heaven. Now, if a patriarch lived ten of their years, which may be the term of their existence, and which according to our computation make 800 of our years, he was pretty nearly of the age of Methusalem; for what signifies a fraction of an hundred years or so?—Yet I offer this only as a conjecture; nor will I weary your Ladyship with more, though I am not a little vain of my new speculations.

Apropos to millions, have you heard, Madam, of the Prince de Guéméné's breaking for 28,000,000 of livres? Would not one think it was a debt contracted by the two Foleys ? I know of another Prince de Guéméné, who lived, I think, early in the reign of Louis Quatorze, and had a great deal of wit. His wife was a *savante*. One day, he met coming out of her closet an old Jew (not such as the present Prince and the Foleys deal with, but) quite in rags, and half stark. The Prince asked who he was? The Princess replied scornfully, 'Mais il me montre l'hebreu.'—'Eh, bien,' said the Prince, 'et bientôt il vous montera son cul.'—I hope this story, if you did not know it, will make amends for the rest of my rhapsody.

113. To the Earl of Strafford

[*Aetat* 66]

Berkeley Square
Dec. 11, 1783

Your Lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them; not lest they should sink below the

the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your Lordship to be assured, that, however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence. I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation, and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your Lordship only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India Bill, air-balloons, Vestris, and the automaton,[1] share all attention. Mrs. Siddons, as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel. The low buffoonery of Lord Thurlow, in laying the caricature of the coalition

[1] A mechanical chess-player made by an Austrian—Wolfgang, Baron von Kempelen (1734-1804).—T.

coalition on the table of your Lordship's House, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Flood, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it; not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous début on the very night of his entry was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. Hamilton, Lord Abercorn's heir, but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness; and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

Your Lordship sees in the papers that the two Houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the Volunteers. Indeed, it was time for the Protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the Catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address; but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. Flood's discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect. It is a very serious moment! I am in pain lest your county, my dear Lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

I am impatient for next month, for the pleasure of seeing your

your Lordship and Lady Strafford, and am of both the devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

114. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 66]

Dec. 30, 1783

I am not such a buzzard, Madam, but that I did guess from your Ladyship's silence *and other circumstances,* that my last letter or two were not to your taste. I was, and perhaps shall be, a prophet; but as that is a profession never honoured in its own country (as I can say with truth and a little vanity I have often found), I shall touch on nothing you do not like. I obeyed your silence, lest I should say what you wished me not to say; and now you bid me write again, I am ready to talk nonsense rather than sense, being sure that I have much more talent for the one than the other. News, I know none, but that they are crying peerages about the streets in barrows, and can get none off. Lord Chesterfield[1] is named Ambassador to Spain, to pay off the old debt of sending us Gondomar, and the Foundling Hospital is to be converted into an academy of politicians.

I did mean to pass my holidays at Twickenham, but the weather is so severe I did not venture. I have been so perfectly well since I came to town, that I will not risk another rheumatism.

American

[1] Philip Stanhope (1755-1818), fifth Earl of Chesterfield, cousin and successor of the witty Earl.—T.

American news may now be a neutral article; Washington, *qui, il me semble, tranche un peu du roi,* has instituted a military order, and calls it the order of Cincinnatus, *ce qui tranche un peu du pedant.* He sent it to La Fayette, and it made an uproar in Paris. As the *noblesse* spell only by the ear, they took it for the order of St. Senatus. They had recourse to the calendar, and, finding no such saint in heaven's almanac, they concluded it was a new canonization at Boston, and were enraged that Washington should encroach on the papacy as well as on the diadem. It may offend even the Bishop of Derry, who has renounced all religions to qualify himself for being a cardinal. Lord Edward Fitzgerald told me last night that he fears the Volunteers are very serious: *sans compter* the spirits which the late revolution here may give them—but I had better break off, lest I offend by sliding into politics, which you dislike.

I shall like prodigiously to be teadrunkwith'd by Lady Ossory and the graces, whether they are consubstantial or only coexistent, and shall not regret Mdlle. Heinel, with

> Her arms sublime that float upon the air.

You laugh at my distresses, Madam, but it is a very serious thing to have taken an old cook as yellow as a dishclout, and have her seduced by a jolly dog of a coachman, and have her miscarry of a child and go on with a dropsy. All my servants think that the moment they are useless I must not part with them, and so I have an infirmary instead of a *menage;* and those that are good for anything do nothing but get children,

so that my house is a mixture of a county and foundling hospital. I don't wonder at his Majesty, who has packed off the decrepit Earl and the procreative Bishop. Adieu till Thursday.

You accuse me of twenty things that I have no sort of title to, as sense, prudence, entertainment, jollity, and mystery. Who would ever think, Madam, of those being features in my character? It is like your desiring me to write and *promising* me not to say above two words in answer to my letters. Indeed, I shall not write on those terms. I have no more vanity than hypocrisy; and, if you would only substitute *indifference* in the place of all the attributes you have so graciously bestowed on me, you would find it the sole key to almost every action of my life for some time past, and I believe for all to come. With neither love nor hatred, with neither avarice nor ambition, it is very seldom that one grows a hypocrite after being the contrary. If I could be vain or forget myself, your Ladyship's compliments would have that effect; but, as they have not turned my head hitherto, I trust they will not be able, and then I am sure nothing else will, since I can boast and desire to boast of nothing but being yours, &c.

115. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Aetat* 66]

Berkeley Square
Feb. 2, 1784

I thank you for your condolence on the death of my brother,[1] and on the considerable diminution of my own fortune

[1] Sir Edward Walpole.

tune, though neither are events to which I am not perfectly reconciled. My brother was seventy-seven, had enjoyed perfect health and senses to that age, did not even begin to break till last August, suffered no pain, saw death advance gradually though fast, with the coolest tranquillity, did not even wish to live longer, and died both with indifference and without affectation; is that a termination to lament?

I do lose fourteen hundred a year by his death, but had I reason to expect to keep it so long? I had twice been offered the reversion for my own life, and positively refused to accept it, because I would receive no obligation that might entangle my honour and my gratitude, and set them at variance. I never did ask or receive a personal favour from my most intimate friends when in power, though they were too upright to have laid me under the same difficulties, and have always acted an honest uniform part; but though I love expense, I was content with a fortune far above any merit I can pretend to, and knew I should be content were it much lessened. As it would be contemptible to regret the diminution at sixty-six, there is no merit in being quite easy under the loss. But you do me honour I do not deserve in complimenting me on not loving money. I have always loved what money would purchase, which is much the same thing; and the whole of my philosophy consists in reconciling myself to buying fewer baubles for a year or two that I may live, and when the old child's baby-house is quite full of playthings.

I am surprised that you expected me to take notice of Lord Harcourt's

Harcourt's turning courtier.[1] It did not astonish me in the least, as I have known for near two years that such an event was by no means improbable, and did myself try to contribute to it when I thought it not at all irreconcilable with his former conduct. Nor do I wonder at your announcing in effect the same of yourself. Were I surprised, I should contradict one of my own maxims which I have scarce or never known to fail, and which is, that men are always most angry with those with whom they quarrel last, which generally produces reconciliations between those whose hatreds agree *in eodem tertio*. But in truth I concern myself with no man's politics but my own; first, because I have no more right to dictate to others, than I will allow anybody to dictate to me; and secondly, because I can see into no heart but my own, nor know its real motives of action. My own point has been to be consistent ever since I first thought on politics, which was five-and-forty years ago, and I feel a satisfaction in having been so steady, because it seems to me if I do not deceive or flatter myself, that it is a proof that I have acted on principle and not from disappointment, resentment, passion, interest, or fickleness.

It made me smile indeed when I heard that Lord Harcourt on his change had given away his ring of Brutus to Lady Jersey's little boy; because I do not see how anything that has happened within this twelve-month has affected the character of Brutus, who died seventeen hundred years before the coalition

[1] Lord Harcourt, who had been a staunch Whig, turned against Fox's India Bill, on which the King offered him the embassy to Spain and made his wife Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen.

coalition was thought on; I am glad however that if I change I may keep my Caligula without committing treason.

Your distinction of the *crown's friends* is, I own, too theologic a refinement for my simple understanding, who never conceived a confusion of two natures in one person, yet still remaining separate; nor in human affairs should I comprehend why a Pope's disgracing himself as a gentleman by the meanest duplicity should make one fall in love with his tiara. Do you think I should accept for sound reasoning if you were capable of telling me, that though you vowed in a sermon that you would never be a bishop, yet your gown being distinct from you, you could see no reason why your gown might not be turned into lawn sleeves?

What miracles the new set of men that are to arise are to achieve, I neither know nor care; I shall be out of the question before that blessed millennium arrives, unless they are already come, as perhaps they are, and for that too I cannot have long to care; though I firmly believe that your *new set* will only effect what has often been tried before, and what you say *ought* to be tried, i.e. to prove themselves the *crown's friends*—an act of loyalty which I dare to say the wearer will be the first to pardon.

You see by my using the same liberality of correspondence I approve of yours. I am above disguising my sentiments, and am too low for any man to disguise his to me. Mine indeed having no variety in them, must be less entertaining, and therefore, unless I take a freak of hobbling to court, you can have no curiosity to hear them, nor should I have mentioned

tioned them now, but that I thought it respectful to you, and candid when you communicated your *new* sentiments to me, to tell you that mine remained unaltered.

I cannot imagine why you think that I shall not like your tragedy; am I apt to dislike your writings? Though I am too sincere to flatter you when I think you unequal to yourself, I did reckon that I was one who had taste enough to be sensible to the utmost of the beauties of your capital works—and tragedy is certainly not a walk in which I can believe you will miss your way; you have trodden more difficult paths with the happiest facility. I shall be glad to see your piece when you will indulge me with it.

And am yours ever,

HORACE WALPOLE.[1]

P. S. Mr. Jerningham has just published a new poem on the doctrines of the Scandinavian bards. It is far superior to his other works. The versification is good; very many expressions and lines beautiful, and the whole nervous and not like his uniform turtle ditties. It might have been thrown into a better plan; and it ends rather abruptly and tamely. He seems to have kept the *Descent of Odin* in his eye, though he had not the art of conjuring up the most forceful feelings, as Gray has done, in a subject in which there is so much of the terrible. Though one has scarce any idea of what the whole is about, yet one is enwrapt by it—as one is delighted with the *Flower and Leaf*, though a mere description of ladies in white velvet

[1] A coolness followed the dispatch of this letter, and all communications between Walpole and Mason ceased until a few months previous to the death of the former.—T.

velvet and green satin set with rubies and emeralds, and holding wands of *agnus castus*.

116. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway

[*Aetat* 67]

Strawberry Hill
Oct. 15, 1784

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself Lady Aylesbury mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon; I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and, after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts:* only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to write

write political ship-news, in that style which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between Bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages;* and Salisbury Plain, Newmarket Heath (another canvass for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the* Downs) arising into dockyards for aerial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations. But to come to my ship-news:—

'The good balloon Daedalus, Captain Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

'Arrived on Brand Sands, the Vulture, Captain Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l'air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from Mount Etna, Sir W. Hamilton, commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the Cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from Mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phoenix is to be cut down to a second-rate.'

In

In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless. But enough of my fooleries; for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

117. To Miss Hannah More[1]

[*Aetat* 67]

Strawberry Hill
Nov. 13, 1784

Thank you a thousand times, dear Madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianted by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed, can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in Alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pied de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder

[1] Hannah More (1745-1833), religious writer and philanthropist, at this time well known in London literary circles which she described in her poem *Bas Bleu*. Her acquaintance with Walpole began in 1781. He invited her to Strawberry Hill and printed her poem *Bonner's Ghost* at the Strawberry Hill Press. She was a frequent correspondent of his later years. Before his death she had in large measure withdrawn from London society, but at this period much of her time was spent with Mrs. Garrick, either in London or at her country house at Hampton.—T.

plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, Madam, I am surprised—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female.[1] Her ear, as you remark, is perfect; but that, being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes. Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay, all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language, and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, Madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late Queen patronized Stephen Duck,[2] who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans

[1] Mrs. Anne Yearsley (1756-1806), the 'Bristol milkwoman.' Mrs. Yearsley's poetical talents were brought to Hannah More's notice by her cook. She helped the milkwoman to publish her poems by subscription, and collected a sum of money for her which was invested in the names of trustees—Hannah More and Mrs. Montagu. Mrs. Yearsley objected to this arrangement, and quarrelled with Hannah More. In later life she kept a circulating library at Bristol, and wrote a tragedy, *Earl Godwin*, which was acted at Bristol and Bath.—T.

[2] The thresher-poet. Queen Caroline made him keeper of her library at Richmond. He took orders in 1746, and committed suicide in a fit of dejection in 1756.—T.

Walpole's Binding

artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellences, Madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What if I should go a step farther, dear Madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as *The Castle of Otranto?* It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's *Cock and Fox*, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's *Eton Ode* and *Churchyard*. Prior's *Solomon* (for I doubt his *Alma*, though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading

reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too sombre. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset House are crowded with Brobdingnag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the *Bluestocking Club*. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, Madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper? And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pactolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Anybody, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges Street;[1] she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-stocking*

[1] Mrs. Vesey.

stocking yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and, though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, Madam, has never been privileged.

I am, with the sincerest regard, Madam,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

118. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 67]

Berkeley Square
April 5, 1785

Had I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter [1] the other night, Madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon.[2] How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents; nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas Bleu* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas Bleu*, in which good nature and good humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of

[1] Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), poet and translator of Epictetus. She had been a friend of Johnson, and a contributor to *The Rambler*. In her remarks on the 'blue-stocking set,' of which Mrs. Carter was a well-known member, Lady Louisa Stuart writes of her as one 'upon whom the sound scholarship of a learned man sate, as it does upon a man, easily and quietly, and who was no more vain of being a profound Grecian than an ordinary woman of knowing how to spell.'—T.

[2] Hannah More sent to Horace Walpole an anonymous letter, written to ridicule the adoption of French idioms into the English language by the fashionable people of the day. (*Works* of Lord Orford, vol v. p. 582.)—T.

of familiarity. I did wish you to write another *Percy*, but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the meantime, I beseech you not only to print your *specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationers' Hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the *galimatias* will give the *ton* to the court, as Euphues did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it: and surely it is not *your* interest, Madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter everywhere to those that are worthy of seeing it; that is, indeed, in very few places; for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to everybody that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors: but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to

you

you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, 'Tell truth and shame the devil,' I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman, who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, Madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

119. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 67]

Strawberry Hill
June 20, 1785

I give your Ladyship a thousand thanks for the crown of laurel you sent me: I tried it on immediately; but it certainly was never made for me; it was a vast deal too big, and did not fit me at all; it must have been designed for one of double my size. Besides, as I never wear so much as a hat, it would make my head ache—and then, too, as nobody in the village has worn a sprig of laurel since Mr. Pope's death, good Lord! how my neighbours would stare, if I should appear with a chaplet, to which I have no more title than Lord de Ferrers to

to the earldom of Leicester. I will not be such a bear as to send back your Ladyship's favour: but if you would give me leave to present it to poor Mr. Hayley, or Mr. Cumberland, who ruin themselves in new laurels every day, it would make them as happy as princes; and I dare answer that either of them would write an ode upon you, not quite so good perhaps, yet within a hundred thousand degrees as excellent as Major Scott's, and at least better than Mr. Warton's. However, though I am no poet, yet I don't know what I may come to, if I live. I have just written the life of a young lady in verse; in which, perhaps, I have too much affected brevity, though had I chosen to spin it out by a number of proper names, more falsehoods, and a tolerable quantity of anachronisms, there was matter enough to have furnished as many volumes as Miss Bellamy's Memoirs. Mine I have comprised in these four lines:—

> Patty was a pretty maid;
> Patty was of men afraid;
> Patty grew her fears to lose,
> And grew so brave, she lost her nose.

As the world is now so overstocked with anecdotes, I don't know whether it will not be advisable for future English biographers to aim at my conciseness, and confine themselves to quatrains. Dr. Johnson's history, though he is going to have as many lives as a cat, might be reduced to four lines; but I shall wait, to extract the quintessence, till Sir John Hawkins,

Madam

A Contemporary Print from Walpole's Collection

Madam Piozzi,[1] and Mr. Boswell have produced their quartos. Apropos, Madam, t'other night I was sitting with Mrs. Vesey; there was very little light; arrived Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a person whom I took for Mr. Boswell. I sewed up my mouth, and, though he addressed me two or three times, I answered nothing but yes or no. Just as he was going away, I found out that it was Mr. Richard Burke,[2] and endeavoured to repair my causticity. I am not quite in charity with Sir Joshua; he desired to come and see my marvellous Henry VII; when he saw it, he said, 'It is in the old hard Flemish manner.' For hard, it is so bold, that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish, there is nothing Flemish in it, except a *chiaroscuro*, as masterly as Rubens's; but it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long!

I went last week to see a new piece, by O'Keeffe, my favourite author, next to Major Scott. Harry Fox was in the box. I asked him if he had ever seen *The Agreeable Surprise;* he said, No; I cried it up to the heavens. He was much surprised at *The Beggar on Horseback,* and asked me if *The Beggar on Horseback* was like *The Agreeable Surprise.* The new piece is very low, to be sure, and yet it diverted me; but you know I like extremes, and next to perfect wit, perfect nonsense, when it is original. A sort of folly I do not admire is air-balloons; but I believe their reign is over. They say Monsieur Pilatrier

[1] *Née* Hester Lynch Salusbury; b. 1741; m. 1. (1763) Henry Thrale, a rich brewer; 2. (1784) Gabriel Piozzi, an Italian musician. She is chiefly known from her friendship with Dr. Johnson, which, however, came to an end after her second marriage. She published *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson* in 1786, and *Letters to and from Dr. Johnson* in 1788. She died in 1821.—T.

[2] Brother or son of the statesman.—T.

Pilatrier[1] and another man have been burnt to cinders, and Mr. Sadler has not been heard of yet.

The old, mad, drunken Duke of Norfolk is going to be married again to a Miss Eld, who is forty years old and a Protestant.

Tuesday

I could not finish my letter yesterday, for Lord Sandwich, who was to breakfast with me, arrived sooner than I expected. He brought Mr. Noble with him, the author of the *History of the Cromwells*, and Mr. Selwyn came to dinner with us, and the latter stayed all night. Lord Sandwich has taken the patronage of Mr. Noble (as Hinchinbrook was the residence of Oliver), and the second edition will be much more accurate and curious than the first. I could but look with admiration at the Earl, who at our age can enter so warmly into any pursuits and find them amusing! It is pleasant to have such spirits, that, after going through such busy political scenes, he can be diverted with carrying a white wand at Handel's jubilee,[2] and for two years together! Do you think Lord Lansdowne would be content with being master of the ceremonies at Bath? The papers tell a different story from mine of poor Pilatrier's exit. I hope it will prevent Mr. Fitzpatrick from such an expedition

[1] Jean François Pilatre de Rozier (1756-1785), a well-known French aeronaut. On June 15, 1785, he ascended from Boulogne in a defective balloon, which burst almost at once. Pilatre and his companion fell to the ground from a considerable height, and were killed on the spot.—T.

[2] The Handel Commemoration, held in Westminster Abbey on June 3 and 6, 1785.—T.

expedition. It would be silly to break one's neck in going no whither; don't you think so, Madam?

120. To John Pinkerton[1]

[*Aetat* 67]

June 26, 1785

I have sent your book to Mr. Colman, Sir, and must desire you in return to offer my grateful thanks to Mr. Knight, who has done me an honour, to which I do not know how I am entitled, by the present of his poetry, which is very classic, and beautiful, and tender, and of chaste simplicity.

To *your* book, Sir, I am much obliged on many accounts; particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight, to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself whence you feel so much disregard for certain authors whose fame is established: you have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, on the plea of their being imitators: it was natural, then, to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity. I think I have discovered a cause, which I do not remember to have seen noted; and *that* cause I suspect to have been, that certain of those authors possessed grace:—do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing, but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve

[1] John Pinkerton (1758-1826), antiquary and historian. Pinkerton frequently visited Strawberry Hill. After Walpole's death Pinkerton published *Walpoliana* (2 vols. 12 mo.), containing notes of Walpole's conversation, letters addressed by him to Pinkerton, and remarks on Walpole's habits and character.—T.

serve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style, which regards expression. Grace, I think, belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown; Virgil, in particular: and yet I am far from disagreeing with you on his subject in general. There is such a dearth of invention in the *Æneid* (and when he did invent, it was often so foolishly), so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have frequently said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, that I believe I should like his poem better, if I was to hear it repeated, and did not understand Latin. On the other hand, he has more than harmony: whatever he utters is said gracefully, and he ennobles his images, especially in the *Georgics;* or, at least, it is more sensible there, from the humility of the subject. A Roman farmer might not understand his diction in agriculture; but he made a Roman courtier understand farming, the farming of that age, and could captivate a Lord of Augustus's Bedchamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. On the contrary, Statius and Claudian, though talking of war, would make a soldier despise them as bullies. That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me to be more than style, if I do not refine too much: and I admire, I confess, Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil 'tossed about his dung with an air of majesty.' A style may be excellent without grace: for instance, Dr. Swift's. Eloquence may bestow an immortal style, and one of more dignity; yet eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air that flows from or constitutes grace. Addison himself

self was master of that grace, even in his pieces of humour, and which do not owe their merit to style; and from that combined secret he excels all men that ever lived, but Shakespeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach towards burlesque and buffoonery, when even his humour descended to characters that in other hands would have been vulgarly low. Is not it clear that Will Wimble was a gentleman, though he always lived at a distance from good company? Fielding had as much humour, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting. His innkeepers and parsons are the grossest of their profession; and his gentlemen are awkward when they should be at their ease.

The Grecians had grace in everything; in poetry, in oratory, in statuary, in architecture, and probably, in music and painting. The Romans, it is true, were their imitators; but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to the rank of originals. Horace's odes acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces of his manner and purity of his style—the chief praise of Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than Horace's odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, Sir, owed his reputation to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled, and even fell flat; but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible; one might say that he excelled in painting ladies in enamel, but could not succeed in portraits in oil, large as life. Milton had such superior merit, that I will only say, that if his angels, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as the

the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy and graces of the Venus of Medicis; as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas: and the *Allegro, Penseroso,* and *Comus* might be denominated from the Three Graces; as the Italians gave similar titles to two or three of Petrarch's best sonnets.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace (for his mind was graceful) if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; which, when it does not offer itself naturally, degenerates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is the mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry produces erroneous dignity; the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, distort or prevent grace. Nature, that furnishes samples of all qualities, and on the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive and comprehensive than I could make definitions of my meaning; but I will apply the swan only, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me an idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure; his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet may be ugly, his notes hissing, not musical, his walk not natural; he can soar, but it is with difficulty: still, the impression the swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable

markable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile: but, if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more: he certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his *Lutrin*, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Excepting Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, and the other a buffoon. In my eyes, the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and the *Rape of the Lock*, are standards of grace and elegance not to be paralleled by antiquity; and eternal reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the *Pucelle* degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his *Henriade* leaves Virgil, and even Lucian, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors.

The *Dunciad* is blemished by the offensive images of the games; but the poetry appears to me admirable; and, though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others: it has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal.

The

The lines on Italy, on Venice, on convents, have all the grace for which I contend as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful; and the *Rape of the Lock*, besides the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace is denominated elegance; but by grace I mean something higher: I will explain myself by instances—Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant: Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers and the graces of his style. They conceal his poverty of meaning and want of variety. His complaints, too, may have added an interest which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in poetry, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, such as Ovid's and Cicero's in their banishments. We respect melancholy, because it imparts a similar affection, pity. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sévigné shines both in grief and gaiety. There is too much of sorrow for her daughter's absence; yet it is always expressed by new terms, by new images, and often by wit, whose tenderness has a melancholy air. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty: her allusions, her applications are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance, and attaches you even to the

the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and, when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian. Pray read her accounts of the death of Turenne, and of the arrival of King James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time.

For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression (not that I have written with any method), I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians: (*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*): but, that I may not wander again, nor tire, nor contradict you any more, I will finish now, and shall be glad if you will dine at Strawberry Hill next Sunday, and take a bed there, when I will tell you how many more parts of your book have pleased me, than have startled my opinions, or, perhaps, prejudices. I have the honour to be, Sir, with regard, &c.

121. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 67]

Strawberry Hill
Monday night, July 4, 1785

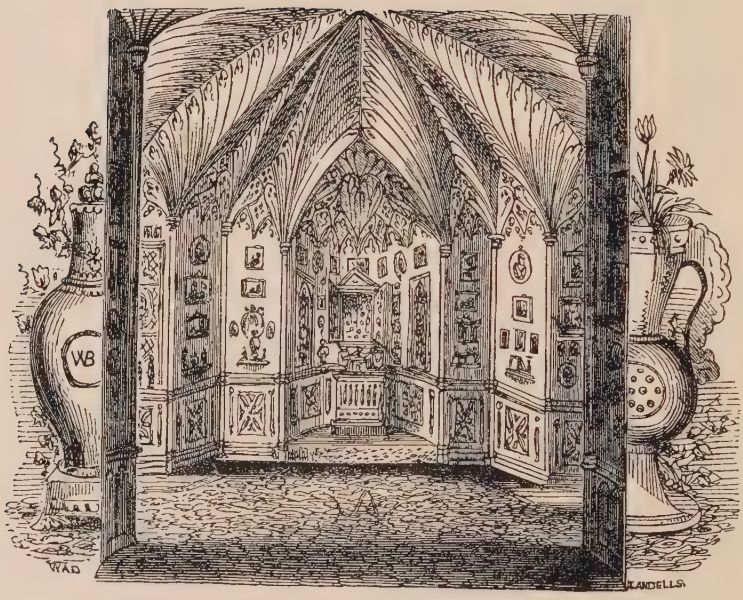
I write again so quickly, Madam, not to detain Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter, for which I give you many thanks, and which you must value as it is so very sensible and unaffected an account of his aerial jaunt, and deserves to be preserved in your Milesian archives; for, whether aerostation becomes a professional art, or is given up with the prosecution of the Tower of

of Babel and other invasions on the coast of Heaven, an original letter under the hand of the first *air*gonauts will always be a precious curiosity.

I have just been reading a work by a new noble authoress, a princess of the blood of Clarence, and a lady deeply versed in the antiquities of the country where the great Brian Mac Gill Patrick was seated, as well as of the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Gauls, &c. It is the present Countess of Moira, whose letter to her son is in the new seventh volume of the *Archaeologia*, and gives an account of a skeleton and its habiliments lately discovered in the county of Down and barony of Linalearty.

Oh, but I have better news for you, Madam, if you have any patriotism as a citizen of this world and wish its longevity. Mr. Herschel has found out that our globe is a comely middle-aged personage, and has not so many wrinkles as seven stars, who are evidently our seniors. Nay, he has discovered that the Milky Way is not only a mob of stars, but that there is another dairy of them still farther off, whence I conclude comets are nothing but pails returning from milking, instead of balloons filled with inflammable air, which must by this time have made terrible havoc in such thickets of worlds, if at all dangerous; now I shall descend, as if out of a balloon, from the heavens to the milkwoman.[1] It is no doubt extraordinary that the poor soul should write tolerably; but, when she can write tolerably, is not it extraordinary that a Miss Seward

[1] Anne Yearsley.



The Tribune

Seward[1] should write no better? I am sick of these sweet singers, and advised that when poor Mrs. Yearsley shall have been set at her ease by the subscription, she should drive her cows from the foot of Parnassus and hum no more ditties. For Chatterton, he was a gigantic genius, and might have soared I know not whither. In the poems avowed for his is a line that Rowley nor all the monks in Christendom could or would have written, and which would startle them all for its depth of thought and comprehensive expression from a lad of eighteen—

Reason, a thorn in Revelation's side!

I will read no more of Rousseau; his *Confessions* disgusted me beyond any book I ever opened. His hen, the schoolmistress, Madame de Genlis, the newspapers say, is arrived in London. I nauseate her too; the eggs of education that both he and she laid could not be hatched till the chickens would be ready to die of old age. I revere genius; I have a dear friendship for common sense; I have a partiality for professed nonsense; but I abhor extravagance, that is given for the quintessence of sense, and affectation that pretends to be philosophy. Good night, Madam!

P. S. Pray tell me where your new library is placed. The parson of Teddington and his wife were robbed, at half an hour after nine last night, by three footpads, with pistols, at my back gate. My housekeeper heard the bustle from her room that is over the Holbein chamber. I was in the library, but

[1] Anna Seward, 'the Swan of Litchfield,' She was perhaps the most aggressive of the poetesses of the time, but her letters are still readable.

but knew nothing of the matter till to-day. It is agreeable to have banditti at one's doors!

122. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 67]

Aug. 29, 1785

It is flattering, and too flattering to me, Madam, to be supposed the author of the *Letters on Literature*.[1] The writer has much more variety of knowledge, and of useful knowledge, and a sounder understanding than I have; though I do not think that even thirty years ago I should have written so rashly as he has done, nor so fantastically. Far was it ever from my thoughts to admire Dr. Akenside (and to commend him in a work that excommunicates imitators!) or to depreciate Boileau, or not to think Molière a genius of the first water. Who upon earth has written such perfect comedies? for *The Careless Husband* is but one—*The Nonjuror* was built on *The Tartuffe;* and if *The Man of Mode*[2] and Vanbrugh are excellent, they are too indelicate—and Congreve, who beats all for wit, is not always natural; still less, simple. In fact I disagree with Mr. Heron, as often as I subscribe to him; and though I am an enthusiast to original genius, I cannot forget that there are two classes of authors to be venerated; they who invent, and they who perfect: who has been so original as to exclude improvements?

Well

[1] By Pinkerton, who signed the book 'Robert Heron.'

[2] *The Careless Husband* and *The Nonjuror* are by Colley Cibber; *The Man of Mode* is by Etherege.—T.

Well, Madam, but I not only am not the author of the *Letters*, but, *upon my veracity*, I never saw a line of them, nor knew such a work was in embryo, till it was left at my house in full impression.

Should a doubt remain with any man (your Ladyship I flatter myself will not question my truth) I will give him an irrecusable proof of my not having had a hand in these *Letters*, if he will have patience to wait for it; and that is, that the author will write better than he has done twenty years after I shall be underground. In short, it is a capacity that will improve by maturity, for it will be corrected by opponents; if it is not hardened into the defence of paradoxes by defending them too ingeniously; as was the misfortune of Rousseau, who might have excelled by writing good sense, but found that there was a shorter path to celebrity by climbing the precipice of absurdity.

I cannot make the same excuse for the pious editors of Dr. Johnson's *Prayers:* see what it is to have friends too honest! How could men be such idiots as to execute such a trust? One laughs at every page, and then the tears come into one's eyes when one learns what the poor being suffered, who even suspected his own madness! One seems to be reading the diary of an old almswoman; and, in fact, his religion was not a step higher in its kind. Johnson had all the bigotry of a monk, and all the folly and ignorance too. He sets himself penances of reading two hundred verses of the Bible per day; proposes to learn high Dutch and Italian at past sixty, and at near seventy *begins* to think of examining the proofs (p. 160) of that religion

religion which he had believed so implicitly. So anile was his faith, that on a fast-day he reproaches himself with putting a little milk into his coffee inadvertently! Can one check a smile when, in his old age, one might say his dotage, he tried to read Vossius on baptism?—No wonder he could only *try!* —but one laughs out, when about a dozen years before his death, he confesses he had never yet read the Apocrypha, though when a boy he had heard the story of Bel and the Dragon. I wonder he did not add, and of Jack the Giant-killer—for such blind faith might easily have confounded the impressions of his first childhood, which lasted uninterrupted to his second.

Methinks the specimen, and Rousseau's *Confessions*, should be lessons against keeping journals, which poor Johnson thought such an excellent nostrum for a good life. How foolish might we all appear, if we registered every delirium! Johnson certainly had strong sense at intervals—of how little use was it to himself!—but what drivellers are his disciples, who think they honour him by laying open his every weakness!

If the Cardinal de Rohan has any biographers, or *sincere friends*, the narrative will be very different. He is in the Bastille for forging the Queen's signature to obtain a collar of diamonds: it is supposed for a present to some woman, for his Eminence is very gallant. He is out of luck; he might not have been sent to Newgate here for using the Queen's name to get diamonds.[1]

Lady

[1] An allusion to the Queen's acceptance of some diamonds from Warren Hastings.—T.

Lady Waldegrave, I flatter myself, is very well, Madam: she is at Navestock.

123. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 68]

Berkeley Square
Friday night, Jan. 27, 1786

As the first part entertained your Lady and Lordship, it is but a sort of duty to send you the second. I received a little Italian note from Mrs. Cosway, this morning, to tell me that as I had last week met at her house an old acquaintance, without knowing her, I might meet her again this evening, *en connoissance de cause,* as Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Éon,[1] who, as Mrs. Cosway told me, had taken it ill that I had not reconnoitred her, and said she must be strangely altered—the devil is in it, if she is not!—but, alack, I have found her altered again; adieu to the abbatial dignity that I had fancied I discovered; I now found her loud, noisy, and vulgar; in truth, I believe she had dined a little *en dragon.* The night was hot, she had no muff or gloves, and her hands and arms seem not to have participated of the change of sexes, but are fitter to carry a chair than a fan. I am comforted, too, about her accent. I asked Monsieur Barthélemy, the French Secretary, who was present, whether it was Parisian and good French: he assured me so far from it, that the first time he met her he had been surprised at its being so bad, and that her accent is strong Burgundian. You ask me, Madam, why she is

[1] At this time D'Éon was wearing woman's clothes.

is here. She says, *pour ses petites affaires;* I take for granted for the same reason that Francis was here two years before he was known.

Nor was this all my entertainment this evening. As Mademoiselle Common of Two's reserve is a little subsided, there were other persons present, as three foreign ministers besides Barthélemy, Lord Carmarthen, Count Oginski, Wilkes and his daughter, and the chief of the Moravians. I could not help thinking how posterity would wish to have been in my situation, at once with three such historic personages as D'Éon, Wilkes, and Oginski, who had so great a share in the revolution of Poland, and was king of it for four-and-twenty hours. He is a noble figure, very like the Duke of Northumberland in the face, but stouter and better proportioned.

I remember many years ago making the same kind of reflection. I was standing at my window after dinner, in summer, in Arlington Street, and saw *Patty Blount*[1] (after Pope's death), with nothing remaining of her immortal charms but her *blue eyes,* trudging on foot with her petticoats pinned up, for it rained, to visit *blameless Bethel,*[2] who was sick at the end of the street.

Early in the evening I had been, according to your Ladyship's leave, to wait on Lady Ravensworth. Her cough is very frequent, but it seems entirely from her throat, and not in the least from her breast.

After treating your Ladyship with some of the *dramatis personæ*

[1] Martha Blount (1690-1762), the intimate friend of Pope.
[2] Hugh Bethel, of Rise, Yorkshire, was an intimate friend of Pope, who addressed to him the *Imitation of the Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace.*

La Chevalière d'Eon

personæ of modern story, I beg leave to enclose a Venus of the present hour in her *purus non naturalibus*. The drawing was made by a young lady at Bath, and was given to me by my sister. It diverted me so much that I gave it to Kirgate, with leave to have it engraved for his own benefit, and I should think he would sell hundreds of them.

Miss Hannah More, I see, has advertised her *Bas Bleus*, which I think you will like. I don't know what her *Florio*[1] is. Mrs. *Frail* Piozzi's first volume of Johnsoniana is in the press, and will be published in February. There is published another kind of *Ana* called *Silva*, by a Dr. Heathcote, on which I advise your Ladyship not to throw away five shillings as I did—yet I could not read half a crown's worth; it is a heap of dull commonplace.

124. To Sir Horace Mann

[*Aetat* 68]

Berkeley Square
April 30, 1786

The almanac tells me that I ought to write to you; but then it ought to tell me what to say. I know nothing: people have been out of town for Easter, or rather for Newmarket; for our diversions mark the seasons, instead of their proclaiming themselves. We have no more spring than we had last year. I believe the milkmaids to-morrow will be forced to dress their garlands with Christmas nose-gays of holly and ivy, for want of flowers.

The

[1] A poem, dedicated to Walpole.

The tragedy, or rather, I suppose, the farce of Mr. Hastings's trial is also to commence to-morrow, when he is to make his defence before the House of Commons; where the majority of his judges are *ready* to be astonished at his eloquence, and the transparency of his innocence, and the lustre of his merit. In the meantime, the charges are enormous, and make numbers, who are not to be his jury, marvel how he will clear himself of half; and, if he does, what he will do with the remainder. I have not yet looked into the charge, which fills a thick octavo. My opinion is formed more summarily: innocence does not pave its way with diamonds, nor has a quarry of them on his estate.

All conversation turns on a trio of culprits—Hastings, Fitzgerald,[1] and the Cardinal of Rohan.[2] I have heard so much of all lately, that I confound them, and am not sure whether it was not the first who pretended to buy a brilliant necklace for the *Queen*, or who committed murders in Ireland, not in India; or whether it was not Fitzgerald who did not deal with Cagliostro for the secret of raising the dead, as he may have occasion for it soon. So much for tragedy! Our comic performers are Boswell and Dame Piozzi. The cock-biographer has fixed a direct lie on the hen, by an advertisement in which he affirms that he communicated his manuscript to Madame Thrale, and that she made no objection to what he says of her low opinion of Mrs. Montagu's book. It is very possible

[1] George Robert Fitzgerald, son of George Fitzgerald by Lady Mary Hervey, daughter of Walpole's friend and correspondent. He was hanged for murder in June 1786.—T.

[2] The Cardinal was the dupe of Cagliostro and other clever criminals in stealing a valuable diamond necklace from the court jeweller of France. He was acquitted, but suffered temporary banishment.

possible that it might not be her real opinion, but was uttered in compliment to Johnson, or for fear he should spit in her face if she disagreed with him; but how will she get over her not objecting to the passage remaining? She must have known, by knowing Boswell, and by having a similar intention herself, that his anecdotes would certainly be published;—in short, the ridiculous woman will be strangely disappointed. As she must have heard that the whole first impression of her book was sold the first day, no doubt she expects, on her landing, to be received like the Governor of Gibraltar, and to find the road strewed with branches of palm. Alack, she will discover that, though she has ridden an ass, she will be welcomed with no hosannas. She, and Boswell, and their hero, are the joke of the public. A Dr. Wolcot, *soi-disant,* Peter Pindar, has published a burlesque eclogue, in which Boswell and the signora are the interlocutors, and all the absurdest passages in the works of both are ridiculed. The printshops teem with satiric prints on them; one, in which Boswell, as a monkey, is riding on Johnson, the bear, has this witty inscription, 'My friend *delineavit!*'—But enough of these mountebanks!

The Duchess of Gloucester tells me that Lord Cowper is at Milan, on his way to England; yet, I shall not wonder if he still turns back. I remember Lady Orford came even to Calais, and returned *sur ses pas.*

May 4th.

I must send my letter to the office to-night, for I go to Strawberry to-morrow for two or three days—not that we have spring

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spring or summer yet. I believe both seasons have perceived that nobody goes out of town till July, and that therefore it is not worth while to come over so early as they used to do. The sun might save himself the same trouble, and has no occasion to rise before ten at night; for all nature ought, no doubt, to take the *ton* from people of fashion, unless nature is willing to indulge them in the opportunity of contradicting her! Indeed, at present, our fine ladies seem to copy her—at least, the ancient symbols of her; for, though they do not exhibit a profusion of naked bubbies down to their shoe-buckles, yet they protrude a prominence of gauze that would cover all the dugs of Alma Mater. Don't, however, imagine that I am disposed to be a censor of modes, as most old folks are, who seem to think that they came into the world at the critical moment when everything was in perfection, and ought to suffer no farther innovation. On the contrary, I always maintain that the ordinances of the young are right. Who ought to invent fashions? Surely not the ancient. I tell my veteran cotemporaries that, if they will have patience for three months, the reigning evil, whatever it is, will be cured; whereas, if they fret till things are just as they should be, they may vex themselves to the day of doom. I carry this way of thinking still farther, and extend it to almost all reformations. Could one cure the world of being foolish, it were something; but to cure it of any one folly is only making room for some other, which, one is sure, will succeed to the vacant place.

Mr. Hastings used two days in his defence, which was not thought a very modest one, and rested rather on Machiavel's code

code than on that of rigid moralists. The House is now hearing evidence; and as his counsel, Mr. Machiavel, will not challenge many of the jury, I suppose Mr. Hastings will be honourably acquitted. In fact, who but Machiavel can pretend that we have a shadow of title to a foot of land in India; unless, as our law deems that what is done extra-parochially is deemed to have happened in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, India must in course belong to the crown of Great Britain? Alexander distrained the goods and chattels of Porus upon a similar plea; and the popes thought all the world belonged to them, as heirs-at-law to One who had not an acre upon earth. We condemned and attainted the Popes without trial, which was not in fashion in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and, by the law of forfeiture, confiscated all their injustice to our own use; and thus, till we shall be ejected, have we a right to exercise all the tyranny and rapine that ever was practised by any of our predecessors anywhere,—as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

125. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway

[*Aetat* 68]

Sunday night, June 18, 1786

I suppose you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one,—people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out; and yesterday

yesterday, before I had dined, three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury[1] on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the Prince of Wales, the Prince of Mecklenburg, the Duke of Portland, Lord Clanbrassil, Lord and Lady Clermont, Lord and Lady Southampton, Lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The Prince of Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the Prince and Lord and Lady Clermont to town after tea, to hear some new French players at Lady William Gordon's. The Princess, Lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy the Princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birthday, which diverted the Prince; but all would not do. So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:—

In deathless odes for ever green
  Augustus' laurels blow;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
  In warmer strains to flow.

Oh, why is Flaccus not alive,
  Your favorite scene to sing?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
  His lyre immortal spring.

If

[1] The seat of the Princess Amelia, the aunt of George III.

Mrs. Damer

As warm as his my zeal for you,
Great princess! could I show it:
But though you have a Horace too—
Ah, Madam! he's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer:—

I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me; and I return you my thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

Amelia.

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clovio! [1] Mr.——— assures me he has seen six of the head, and not one of them so fine, or so well preserved. I am glad Sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clovio; or the Duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase, for a thousand pounds. I would not change. I told Sir William Hamilton and the late Duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I had rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. Damer to make a bust to it, and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the illumination and the Jupiter in Lady Di's cabinet,[2] which is worthy of them. And

[1] At the sale of the Duchess Dowager of Portland.—WALPOLE.
[2] A cabinet at Strawberry Hill, ornamented with drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerc.—WALPOLE.

And here my collection winds up; I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, everything is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good night!

126. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 69]

Strawberry Hill
Sept 6, 1787

I will not make a feigned excuse, Madam, nor catch at the pretence you kindly offer me of a lost letter; no, I confess honestly that I knew I owed you one, but was too conscientious to pay my just debts with the base currency of Richmond and Hampton Court, and I have no other specie. I know nothing, do nothing, but repeat the same insipid round that I have passed for so many summers, if summer this has been to be called. The dowagers of my canton pick up and dress up tales of what is done in London and at various watering-places; but I hold it a prudery becoming old men (the reverse of that of old women) not to trouble myself about or censure the frolics of the young; and for my contemporaries, so few of them are left, that unless by living to the age of Old Parr or Jenkins, we are not likely to commit anything remarkable. I have seen none of the French Savoyard, or Lorraine princes and princesses, sterling or pinchbeck: I broke off my *commercial treaty* with France, when I was robbed of half Madame du Deffand's[1] papers, and care no more for their bonne compagnie, than for their

[1] Mme du Deffand willed all her letters and *mss.* to Walpole, but they were withheld by Prince Beauvan.

their convicts Monsieur de Calonne[1] and Madame de la Motte.[2]

Under such a negative existence, what could I write, Madam? I have heard nothing for these two months worth telling you but this little story. There lives at Kingston a Mrs. Barnard, a very wealthy hen-Quaker. She has a passion for beautiful black and white cows, never parts with a pretty calf, and consequently has now a hecatomb as striped and spotted as leopards and tigers. The Queen happened to see this ermined drove, and being struck with the beauty of their robes, sent a page to desire to purchase one. Mrs. Barnard replied, she never sold cows, but would lend her Majesty her bull with all her heart. Apropos to court, it is not a recent story, I believe, but did you ever hear, Madam, that Mrs. Herbert, the Bedchamber Woman, going in a hackney-chair, the chairmen were excessively drunk, and after tossing and jolting her for some minutes, set the chair down; and the foreman, lifting up the top, said, 'Madam, you are so drunk, that if you do not sit still, it will be impossible to carry you'?

To prove how little I had to say, I will empty my bimensual memory with the only other scrap I have collected, and which I may send in part of payment for the four lines of *Latin* of Archbishop Tenison, which I have received from your Ladyship. Mine is an ancient Latin saw, which proves that the famous bulse was a legal escheat to the crown. In the new volume

[1] Calonne was at this time in England.—T.

[2] Jeanne de Luy de St. Rémy de Valois (1756-1791), Comtesse de la Motte, sentenced in 1786 to be branded and imprisoned for life for her share in the theft of Marie Antoinette's diamond necklace. On June 5, 1787, she escaped from the Salpêtrière prison and came to London.—T.

volume of the *Archaeologia* is an essay on the state of the Jews in England in former times; and there it is said, 'Judaeus vero nihil possidere potest, quia quicquid acquirit, acquirit regi.' I suppose nobody will dispute Mr. Hastings being a Jew; or, if you please, for *Judaeus* you may read *Indicus*, so like are the words and the essence.

Many thanks for the advertisement, which is curious indeed! I have not visited Mr. Herschel's giant telescope, though so near me. In truth, the scraps I have learnt of his discoveries have confounded me: my little head will not contain the stupendous idea of an infinity of worlds; not that I at all disbelieve them, or anything that is above my comprehension. Infinite space may certainly contain whatever is put into it: and there is no reason for imagining that nothing has been put into it, but what our short-sighted eyes can see. Worlds, systems of suns and worlds may be as plenty as blackberries; but what can such an incredibly small point as a human skull do with the possibility of Omnipotence's endless creation? Do but suppose that I was to unfold to a pismire in my garden an account of the vast empire of China—not that there is any degree of proportion in the comparison. Proceed; suppose another pismire could form a prodigious, yet invisible, spying-glass, that should give the student ant a glimpse of the continent of China. Oh, I must stop: I shall turn my own brain, which, while it is launching into an ocean of universes, is still admiring pismire Herschel. That he should not have a *wise* look does not surprise me—he may be stupefied at his own discoveries; or to make them, it might require a head constructed too simply

to

to contain any diversity of attention to puny objects. Sir Isaac Newton, they say, was so absorbed in his pursuits, as to be something of a changeling in worldly matters; and when he descended to earth and conjecture he was no phenomenon.

I will alight from my altitudes, and confine myself to our own ant-hill. Have you seen, Madam, the horrible mandate of the Emperor to General Murray? Think of that insect's threatening to sacrifice thousands of his fellow pismires to what he calls *his dignity!* the dignity of a mite, that, supposing itself as superior as an earwig, meditates preventing hosts of its own species from enjoying the happiness and the moment of existence that has been allotted to them in an innumerable succession of ages! But while scorn, contempt, and hatred kindle against the Imperial insect, admiration crowds in for the brave pismires who so pathetically deprecate their doom, yet seem resigned to it! I think I never read anything more noble, more touching, than the remonstrance of the deputies to Prince Kaunitz.

If tyrant dignity is ready to burst on Brabant, appearances with us seem also too warlike. I shall be very sorry if it arrives. I flattered myself that in our humiliated state, the consequence of *our dignity*, we should at least be tame and tranquil for the remnant of my time; but what signifies care about moments? I will return to your letter; which set me afloat on the vasty deep of speculation, to which I am very unequal and do not love. My understanding is more on a level with your ball, and meditations on the destruction of Gorhambury, which I regret

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regret. It was in a very crazy state, but deserved to be propped; the situation is by no means delightful.

I called at Sir Joshua's, while he was at Ampthill, and saw his Hercules for Russia. I did not at all admire it: the principal babe put me in mind of what I read so often, but have not seen, *the monstrous craws*. Master Hercules's knees are as large as, I presume, the late Lady Guilford's. *Blind* Tiresias is *staring* with horror at the terrible spectacle. If Sir Joshua is satisfied with his own departed picture, it is more than the possessors or posterity will be. I think he ought to be paid in annuities only for so long as his pictures last: one should not grudge him the first-fruits.

Mr. Gibbon's three volumes[1] I shall certainly read. I am fond of quartos: and I dare to say he has laboured these, and I shall be quite satisfied if they are equal to the first tome. The *Long Minuet* you may be sure I have, as I get everything I can of Mr. Bunbury's.

Though I have wandered into another sheet, I will not be so unconscionable as to fill more of it; and make your Ladyship repent your condescension of having awakened me. I will only ask whether you have heard that the Duchess of Kingston has adopted the eldest Meadows, paid his debts, given him 600*l.* a year, and intends to make him her heir? Methinks this is robbing Peter to pay *Peter*.

Stay, I forgot to tell you, Madam, that Miss Boyle has designed and carved in marble three medallions of boys, for a chimney

[1] The three last volumes of the *History*, finished in June, 1787, and published in 1788.—T.

chimney-piece, at Ditton. Lady Di has done two pictures for *Macbeth* and *Lear:* the latter with the madman is very fine. Now I have finished indeed.

127. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 70]

Strawberry Hill
Oct. 14, 1787

MY DEAR MADAM,—I am shocked for human nature at the repeated malevolence of this woman! [1] The rank soil of riches we are accustomed to see overrun with seeds and thistles; but who could expect that the kindest seeds sown on poverty and dire misfortunes should meet with nothing but a rock at bottom? Catherine de' Medici, suckled by popes and transplanted to a throne, seems more excusable. Thank Heaven, Madam, for giving you so excellent a heart; ay, and so good a head. You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of a Yearsley, you are void of vanity. How strange, that vanity should expel gratitude! Does not the wretched woman owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame Yearsley reminds me of the troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish. Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her! I beg your pardon for renewing so disgusting a subject, and will

[1] Mrs. Yearsley.—T.

will never mention it again. You have better amusement; you love good works, a temper superior to revenge.

I have again seen our poor friend in Clarges Street:[1] her faculties decay rapidly, and of course she suffers less. She has not an acquaintance in town; and yet told me the town was very full, and that she had had a good deal of company. Her health is re-established, and we must now be content that her mind is not restless. My pity now feels most for Mrs. Hancock,[2] whose patience is inexhaustible, though not insensible.

Mrs. Piozzi, I hear, has two volumes of Dr. Johnson's *Letters* ready for publication. Bruce is printing his *Travels;* which I suppose will prove that his narratives were fabulous, as he will scarce repeat them by the press. These, and two more volumes of Mr. Gibbon's *History,* are all the literary news I know. France seems sunk indeed in all respects. What stuff are their theatrical goods, their *Richards, Ninas,* and *Tarares!* But when their *Figaro* could run threescore nights, how despicable must their taste be grown! I rejoice that their political intrigues are not more creditable. I do not dislike the French from the vulgar antipathy between neighbouring nations, but for their insolent and unfounded airs of superiority. In arms we have almost always outshone them: and till they have excelled Newton, and come near to Shakespeare, pre-eminence in genius must remain with us. I think they are most entitled to triumph over the Italians; as, with the most meagre and inharmonious

[1] Mrs. Vesey.—T.
[2] A lady who lived with Mrs. Vesey.—WALPOLE.

Mrs. Piozzi and Dr. Johnson

inharmonious of all languages, the French have made more of that poverty in tragedy and eloquence, than the Italians have done with the language the most capable of both. But I did not mean to send you a dissertation. I hope it will not be long before you remove to Hampton.—Yet why should I wish that? You will only be geographically nearer to London till February. Cannot you, now and then, sleep at the Adelphi [1] on a visit to poor Vesey and your friends, and let one know if you do?

Yours, my dear Madam, most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

128. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 70]

Strawberry Hill
July 12, 1788

Won't you repent having opened the correspondence, my dear Madam, when you find my letters come so thick upon you? In this instance, however, I am only to blame in part, for being too ready to take advice, for the sole reason for which advice ever is taken—because it fell in with my inclination.

You said in your last that you feared you took up time of mine to the prejudice of the public; implying, I imagine, that I might employ it in composing. Waiving both your compliment and my own vanity, I will speak very seriously to you on that subject, and with exact truth. My simple writings have

[1] Mrs. Garrick, with whom Hannah More was at this time on very friendly terms, had a house in Adelphi Terrace.—T.

have had better fortune than they had any reason to expect; and I fairly believe, in a great degree, because gentlemen writers, who do not write for interest, are treated with some civility if they do not write absolute nonsense. I think so, because I have not unfrequently known much better works than mine much more neglected, if the name, fortune, and situation of the authors were below mine. I wrote early from youth, spirits, and vanity; and from both the last when the first no longer existed. I now shudder when I reflect on my own boldness; and with mortification, when I compare my own writings with those of any great authors. This is so true, that I question whether it would be possible for me to summon up courage to publish anything I have written, if I could recall time past, and should yet think as I think at present. So much for what is over and out of my power. As to writing now, I have totally forsworn the profession, for two solid reasons. One I have already told you; and it is, that I know my own writings are trifling and of no depth. The other is, that, light and futile as they were, I am sensible they are better than I could compose now. I am aware of the decay of the middling parts I had, and others may be still more sensible of it. How do I know but I am superannuated? nobody will be so coarse as to tell me so; but if I published dotage, all the world would tell me so. And who but runs that risk who is an author after seventy? What happened to the greatest author of this age, and who certainly retained a very considerable portion of his abilities for ten years after my age? Voltaire, at eighty-four, I think, went to Paris to receive the incense, in person, of his countrymen

countrymen, and to be witness of their admiration of a tragedy he had written at that Methusalem age. Incense he did receive till it choked him; and, at the exhibition of his play, he was actually crowned with laurel in the box where he sat. But what became of his poor play? It died as soon as he did—was buried with him; and no mortal, I dare to say, has ever read a line of it since, it was so bad.

As I am neither by a thousandth part so great, nor a quarter so little, I will herewith send you a fragment that an accidental rencontre set me upon writing, and which I found so flat that I would not finish it. Don't believe that I am either begging praise by the stale artifice of hoping to be contradicted; or that I think there is any occasion to make you discover my caducity. No; but the fragment contains a curiosity—English verses written by a French prince of the blood,[1] and which at first I had a mind to add to my *Royal and Noble Authors;* but as he was not a royal author of ours, and as I could not please myself with an account of him, I shall revert to my old resolution of not exposing my pen's grey hairs.

Of one passage I must take notice; it is a little indirect sneer at our crowd of authoresses. My choosing to send this to *you* is a proof that I think you an author, that is, a classic. But, in truth, I am nauseated by the Madams Piozzi, &c., and the host of novel writers in petticoats who think they imitate what is inimitable, *Evelina* and *Cecilia.* Your candour, I know, will not agree with me, when I tell you I am not at all charmed with Miss Seward and Mr. Hayley piping to one another: but *you*

[1] Charles d'Orléans.—T.

I exhort, and would encourage to write; and flatter myself you will never be royally gagged and promoted to fold muslins, as has been lately wittily said on Miss Burney,[1] in the list of five hundred living authors. *Your* writings promote virtues; and their increasing editions prove their worth and utility. If you question my sincerity, can you doubt my admiring you, when you have gratified my self-love so amply in your Bas Bleu? [2] Still, as much as I love your writings, I respect yet more your heart and your goodness. You are so good that I believe you would go to heaven, even though there were no Sunday, and only six *working* days in the week. Adieu, my best Madam!

Yours most cordially,
HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. On recollection, I doubt I have before given you the same reasons for my lying fallow that I have in this letter. If so, why, it is like an old man to repeat himself—but at least I will not do so in print.

129. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 70]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 22, 1788

I don't like to defraud you of your compassion, my good friend

[1] Mrs. Delany procured for Fanny Burney the appointment of second keeper of the Queen's robes. This post she held for four years, when, her health seriously impaired, she with difficulty obtained permission to resign.

[2] The Men, not bound by pedant rules,
Nor Ladies' *precieuses ridicules;*
For polish'd Walpole shew'd the way,
How Wits may be both learn'd and gay.

friend, profuse as you are of it. I really suffered scarce any pain at all from my last fit of gout. I have known several persons who think there is a dignity in complaining; and, if you ask how they do, reply, 'Well, I *am*—pretty well—today; but if you knew what I suffered *yesterday!*' Now, methinks nobody has a right to tax another for pity on what is past; and besides, complaint of what is over can only make the hearer glad you are in pain no longer. Yes, yes, my dear Madam, you generally place your pity so profitably, that you shall not waste a drop upon me, who ought rather to be congratulated on being so well at my age.

Much less shall I allow you to make apologies for your admirable and proper conduct towards your poor protégée. And now you have told me the behaviour of a certain great dame, I will confess to you that I have known it some months by accident—nay, and tried to repair it. I prevailed on Lady ———, who as readily undertook the commission, and told the Countess of her treatment of you. Alas, the answer was, 'It is too late; I have no money.' No, but she has, if she has a diamond left. I am indignant; yet, do you know, not at this duchess, or that countess, but at the invention of ranks, and titles, and pre-eminence. I used to hate that king and t'other prince; but, alas! on reflection I find the censure ought to fall on human nature in general. They are made of the same stuff as we, and dare we say what we should be in their situation? Poor creatures! think how they are educated, or rather corrupted, early, how flattered! To be educated properly they should

should be led through hovels, and hospitals, and prisons. Instead of being reprimanded (and perhaps immediately after *sugar-plum'd*) for not learning their Latin or French grammar, they now and then should be kept fasting; and, if they cut their finger, should have no plaster till it festered. No part of a royal brat's memory, which is good enough, should be burthened but with the remembrance of human sufferings. In short, I fear our nature is so liable to be corrupted and perverted by greatness, rank, power, and wealth, that I am inclined to think that virtue is the compensation to the poor for the want of riches: nay, I am disposed to believe that the first footpad or highwayman had been a man of quality, or a prince, who could not bear having wasted his fortune, and was too lazy to work; for a beggar born would think labour a more natural way of getting a livelihood than venturing his life. I have something a similar opinion about common women. No modest girl thinks of many men, till she has been in love with one, has been ruined by him, and abandoned. But to return to my theme, and it will fall heavy on yourself. Could the milkwoman have been so bad, if you had merely kept her from starving, instead of giving her opulence? The soil, I doubt, was bad; but it could not have produced the rank weed of ingratitude, if you had not dunged it with gold, which rises from rock, and seems to meet with a congenial bed when it falls on the human heart.

And so Dr. Warton imagines I am writing Walpoliana! No, in truth, nor anything else; nor shall—nor will I go out in

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a jest-book. Age has not only made me prudent, but, luckily, lazy; and, without the latter extinguisher, I do not know but that farthing candle my discretion would let my snuff of life flit to the last sparkle of folly, like what children call the parson and clerk in a bit of burnt paper. You see by my *writability* in pressing my letters on you, that my pen has still a colt's tooth left, but I never indulge the poor old child with more paper than this smallsized sheet; I do not give it enough to make a paper kite and fly abroad on wings of booksellers. *You* ought to continue writing, for you do good by your writings, or at least mean it; and if a virtuous intention fails, it is a sort of coin, which, though thrown away, still makes the donor worth more than he was before he gave it away. I delight too in the temperature of your piety, and that you would not see the enthusiastic exorcist. How shocking to suppose that the Omnipotent Creator of worlds delegates his power to a momentary insect to eject supernatural spirits that he had permitted to infest another insect, and had permitted to vomit blasphemies against himself! Pray do not call *that* enthusiasm, but delirium. I pity real enthusiasts, but I would shave their heads and take away some blood. The exorcist's associates are in a worse predicament, I doubt, and hope to *make* enthusiasts. If such abominable impostors were not rather a subject of indignation, I could smile at the rivalship between them and the animal magnetists, who are inveigling fools into their different pales. And, alas! while folly has a shilling left, there will be enthusiasts and quack doctors; and there will be

be slaves while there are kings or sugar-planters. I have remarked that though Jesuits, &c., travel to distant east and west to propagate their religion and traffic, I never heard of one that made a journey into Asia or Africa to preach the doctrines of liberty, though those regions are so deplorably oppressed. Nay, I much doubt whether ever any chaplain of the regiments we have sent to India has once whispered to a native of Bengal, that there are milder forms of government than those of his country. No; security of property is not a wholesome doctrine to be inculcated in a land where the soil produces diamonds and gold! In short, if your Bristol exorcist believes he can cast out devils, why does he not go to Leadenhall Street? There is a company whose name is legion.

By your *gambols*, as you call them, after the most ungambolling peeress[1] in Christendom, and by your jaunts, I conclude, to my great satisfaction, that you are quite well. Change of scene and air are good for your spirits; and September, like all our old ladies, has given itself May airs, and must have made your journey very pleasant. Yet you will be glad to get back to your Cowslip Green, though it may offer you nothing but Michaelmas daisies. When you do leave it, I wish you could persuade Mrs. Garrick to settle sooner in London. There is full as good hay to be made in town at Christmas as at Hampton, and some haymakers that will wish for you, particularly your most sincere friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.

I

[1] The Dowager Duchess of Beaufort, a very stiff and stately personage.—T.

130. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 71]

Strawberry Hill
Oct. 11, 1788

I am sorry, Madam, that *mes villageoises* have no better provender than my *syllogisms* to send to their correspondents, nor am I ambitious of rivalling the barber or innkeeper, and becoming the wit of five miles round. I remember how, long ago, I estimated local renown at its just value by a sort of little adventure that I will tell you; and, since that, there is an admirable chapter somewhere in Voltaire which shows that more extended fame is but local on a little larger scale; it is the chapter of the Chinese who goes into a European bookseller's shop, and is amazed at finding none of the works of his most celebrated countrymen; while the bookseller finds the stranger equally ignorant of western classics.

Well, Madam, here is my tiny story: I went once with Mr. Rigby to see a window of painted glass at Messing, in Essex, and dined at a better sort of alehouse. The landlady waited on us and was notably loquacious, and entertained us with the *bons mots* and funny exploits of Mr. Charles; Mr. Charles said this, Mr. Charles played such a trick: oh, nothing was so pleasant as Mr. Charles. But how astonished the poor soul was when we asked who Mr. Charles was; and how much more astonished when she found we had never heard of Mr. Charles Luckyn, who, it seems, is a relation of Lord Grimston, had lived

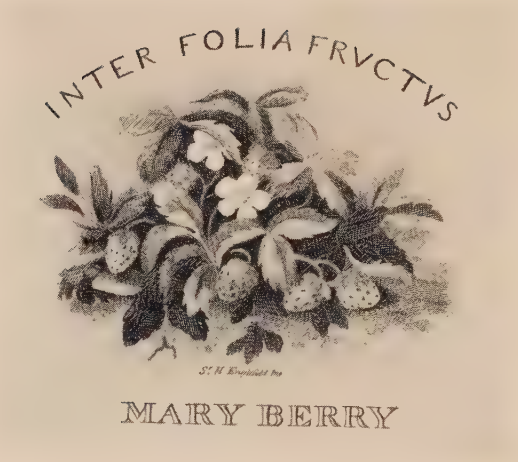
lived in their village, and been the George Selwyn of half a dozen cottages.

If I had a grain of ambitious pride left, it is what, in other respects, has been the thread that has run through my life, that of being forgotten; so true, except the folly of being an author, has been what I said last year to the Prince of Wales when he asked me if I was a Freemason. I replied, 'No, Sir; I never was anything.'

Apropos to the Prince; I am sorry you do not approve of my offering to kiss the Duke's hand when he came to see my house. I never had been presented to him; but, moreover, as I am very secure of never being suspected to pay my court for interest, and certainly never seek royal personages, I always pique myself, when thrown in their way, upon showing that I know I am nobody, and know the distance between them and me: this I take to be common sense, and do not repent of my behaviour. If I were a grandee and in place, I would not, like the late Duchess of Northumberland, jig after them, calling them my master and my mistress. I think, if I were their servant, I would as little, like the same Grace, parade before the Queen with more footmen than her Majesty. *That* was impertinent.

I am sorry, for the third time of this letter, that I have no new village anecdotes to send your Ladyship, since they divert you for a moment. I have one, but some months old. Lady Charleville, my neighbour, told me three months ago, that, having some company with her, one of them had been to see Strawberry. 'Pray,' said another, 'who is that Mr. Walpole?'

Lord



Miss Berry's Bookplate

'Lord!' cried a third, 'don't you know the great epicure, Mr. Walpole?' 'Pho!' said the first, 'great epicure! you mean the antiquarian.' There, Madam, surely this anecdote may take its place in the chapter of local fame. If I have picked up no recent anecdotes on our Common, I have made a much more, to me, precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies of the name of Berry,[1] whom I first saw last winter, and who accidentally took a house here with their father for this season. Their story is singular enough to entertain you. The grandfather,[2] a Scot, had a large estate in his own country, 5,000*l.* a year, it is said; and a circumstance I shall tell you makes it probable. The eldest son married, for love, a woman with no fortune. The old man was enraged and would not see him. The wife died and left these two young ladies. Their grandfather wished for an heir male, and pressed the widower to remarry, but could not prevail; the son declaring he would consecrate himself to his daughters and their education. The old man did not break with him again, but much worse

[1] Mary Berry (1763-Nov. 1852), and Agnes Berry (1764-Jan. 1852), daughters of Robert Berry (d. 1817) by a daughter of John Seton, of Kirkbridge, Yorkshire. Horace Walpole's liking for the Miss Berrys soon developed into an affection to which his letters to them abundantly testify. He secured as much of their society as possible. They owed to him a position in society which they kept until the end of their days. It is stated, on the authority of Miss Berry's maid, who survived until 1896 or 1897, that Walpole offered his 'hand and heart' to Mary Berry and his 'hand and coronet' to Agnes Berry—doubtless with a view of securing their constant society.

In 1796 Miss Berry became engaged to General Charles O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, but the engagement was broken off in six months' time. The rest of the long lives of the two sisters was uneventful.

Horace Walpole left to the Miss Berrys a sum of money, and the house at Little Strawberry Hill which had been their country residence during his lifetime. Mary Berry edited Horace Walpole's *Works* (London, 1798, 5 vols. 4to), though the editorship is commonly attributed to her father, and the *Letters of the Marquise du Deffand to Horace Walpole* (London, 1810, 4 vols. 12mo).—T.

[2] It was not Mr. Berry's father who disinherited him, but his maternal uncle, Mr. Ferguson, a successful Scotch merchant, who made a large fortune, and purchased the estate of Raith in Fifeshire.—T.

worse, totally disinherited him, and left all to his second son, who very handsomely gave up 800*l.* a year to his elder brother. Mr. Berry has since carried his daughters for two or three years to France and Italy, and they are returned the best-informed and the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and, being qualified to talk on any subject, nothing is so easy and agreeable as their conversation—not more apposite than their answers and observations. The eldest, I discovered by chance, understands Latin and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly, and has copied admirably Lady Di's gipsies, which I lent, though for the first time of her attempting colours. They are of pleasing figures; Mary, the eldest, sweet, with fine dark eyes, that are very lively when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale; Agnes, the younger, has an agreeable sensible countenance, hardly to be called handsome, but almost. She is less animated than Mary, but seems, out of deference to her sister, to speak seldomer, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents. I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably; but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons. In short, good sense, information, simplicity, and ease characterize the Berrys; and this is not particularly mine, who am apt to be prejudiced, but the universal voice of all who know them. The first night I met them I would not be acquainted with them, having heard so much in their praise that

I concluded they would be all pretension. The second time, in a very small company, I sat next to Mary, and found her an angel both inside and out. Now I do not know which I like best, except Mary's face, which is formed for a sentimental novel, but is ten times fitter for a fifty times better thing, genteel comedy. This delightful family comes to me almost every Sunday evening, as our region is too *proclamatory* to play at cards on the seventh day. I do not care a straw for cards, but I do disapprove of this partiality to the youngest child of the week: while the other poor six days are treated as if they had no souls to save. I forgot to tell you that Mr. Berry is a little merry man with a round face, and you would not suspect him of so much feeling and attachment. I make no excuse for such minute details; for, if your Ladyship insists on hearing the humours of my district, you must for once indulge me with sending you two pearls that I found in my path.

131. To Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry

[*Aetat* 71]

April 28, at night, 1789

By my not saying *no* to Thursday, you, I trust, understood that I meant *yes;* and so I do. In the meantime, I send you the most delicious poem upon earth. If you don't know what it is all about, or why, at least you will find glorious similes about everything in the world, and I defy you to discover three bad verses in the whole stack. Dryden was but the prototype of *The*

The Botanic Garden[1] in his charming *Flower and Leaf;* and if he had less meaning, it is true he had more plan: and I must own that his white velvets and green velvets, and rubies and emeralds, were much more virtuous gentlefolks than most of the flowers of the creation, who seem to have no fear of Doctors' Commons before their eyes. This is only the second part; for, like my king's eldest daughter in the *Hieroglyphic Tales,* the first part is not born yet:—no matter. I can read this over and over again for ever; for though it is so excellent, it is impossible to remember anything so disjointed, except you consider it as a collection of short enchanting poems—as the Circe at her tremendous devilries in a church; the intrigue of the dear nightingale and rose; and the description of Medea; the episode of Mr. Howard, which ends with the most sublime of lines—in short, all, all, all is the most lovely poetry. And then one sighs that such profusion of poetry, magnificent and tender, should be thrown away on what neither interests nor instructs, and, with all the pains the notes take to explain, is scarce intelligible.

How strange it is that a man should have been inspired with such enthusiasm of poetry by poring through a microscope, and peeping through the keyholes of all the seraglios of all the flowers in the universe! I hope his discoveries may leave any impression but of the universal polygamy going on in the vegetable world, where, however, it is more gallant than amongst [the] human race; for you will find that they are the botanic ladies who keep harems, and not the gentlemen. Still

[1] By Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin.

HIEROGLYPHIC

TALES.

Schah Babam ne comprenoit jamais bien que les choſes abſurdes & hors de toute vraiſemblance.

Le Sopha, p. 5.

STRAWBERRY-HILL:
PRINTED BY T. KIRGATE, MDCCLXXXV.

The Title Page of *Hieroglyphic Tales*

Still, *I* will maintain that it is much better that we should have two wives than your sex two husbands. So pray don't mind Linnaeus and Dr. Darwin; Dr. Madan had ten times more sense. Adieu!

Your doubly constant

TELYPTHORUS.

132. To Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry

[*Aetat* 71]

Strawberry Hill
Tuesday, June 23, 1789

I am not a little disappointed and mortified at the post bringing me no letter from you to-day; you promised to write on the road. I reckon you arrived at your station on Sunday evening: if you do not write till next day, I shall have no letter till Thursday!

I am not at all consoled for my double loss: my only comfort is, that I flatter myself the journey and air will be of service to you both. The latter has been of use to me, though the part of the element of air has been chiefly acted by the element of water, as my poor haycocks feel! Tonton[1] does not miss you so much as I do, not having so good a taste; for he is grown very fond of *me*, and I return it for your sakes, though he deserves it too, for he is perfectly good-natured and tractable; but he is not beautiful, like his 'god dog,' as Mr. Selwyn, who dined here on Saturday, called my poor late favourite; especially

[1] A dog belonging to the Miss Berrys, left in Horace Walpole's care during their absence in Yorkshire.—T.

especially as I have had him clipped. The shearing has brought to light a nose an ell long; and, as he has now *nasum rhinocerotis,* I do not doubt but he will be a better critic in poetry than Dr. Johnson, who judged of harmony by the principles of an author, and fancied, or wished to make others believe, that no Jacobite could write bad verses, nor a Whig good.

I passed so many evenings of the last fortnight with you, that I almost preferred it to our two honeymoons, and consequently am the more sensible to the deprivation; and how dismal was *Sunday* evening, compared to those of last autumn! If you both felt as I do, we might surpass *any* event in the annals of Dunmow. Oh, what a prodigy it would be if a husband and *two* wives should present themselves and demand the flitch of bacon, on swearing that not one of the three in a year and a day had wished to be unmarried! For my part, I know that my affection has done nothing but increase; though were there but one of you, I should be ashamed of being so strongly attached at my age; being in love with both, I glory in my passion, and think it a proof of my sense. Why should not two affirmatives make a negative, as well as the reverse? and then a double love will be wisdom—for what is wisdom in reality but a negative? It exists but by correcting folly, and when it has peevishly prevailed on us to abstain from something we have a mind to, it gives itself airs, and in action pretends to be a personage, a nonentity sets up for a figure of importance! It is the case of most of those phantoms called virtues, which, by smothering poor vices, claim a reward as thief

thief-takers do. You know I have a partiality for drunkenness, though, I never practised it: it is a reality; but what is sobriety, only the absence of drunkenness? However, *mes chères femmes*, I make a difference between women and men, and do not extend my doctrine to your sex. Everything is excusable in us, and nothing in you. And pray remember that I will not lose my flitch of bacon—though.

Have you shed a tear over the Opera House? [1] or do you agree with me that there is no occasion to rebuild it? The nation has long been tired of operas, and has now a good opportunity of dropping them. Dancing protracted their existence for some time! But *the room after* was the real support of both, and was like what has been said of your sex, that they never speak their true meaning but in the postscript of their letters. Would not it be sufficient to build an after-room on the whole *emplacement*, to which people might resort from all assemblies? It should be a codicil to all the diversions of London; and the greater the concourse, the more excuse there would be for staying all night, from the impossibility of ladies getting their coaches to drive up. To be crowded to death in a waiting-room, at the end of an entertainment, is the whole joy; for who goes to any diversion till the last minute of it? I am persuaded that, instead of retrenching St. Athanasius's Creed, as the Duke of Grafton proposed in order to draw *good company* to church, it would be more efficacious if the congregation were to be indulged with an after-room in the vestry; and

[1] Burned down on the night of June 17, 1789.—T.

and, instead of two or three being gathered together, there would be all the world, before prayers would be quite over.

Wednesday.—I calculated too rightly; no letter to-day! yet I am not proud of my computation, I had rather have heard of you to-day; it would have looked like keeping your promise. It has a bad air your forgetting me so early; nay, and after your scoffing me for supposing you would not write till your arrival I don't know where. You see I think of *you*, and write every day, though I cannot dispatch my letter till you have sent me a direction. Much the better I am indeed for your not going to Switzerland. Yorkshire is in the glaciers for me, and you are as cold as Mr. Palmer. Miss Agnes was coy, and was not so flippant of promising me letters; well, but I do trust she *will* write, and then, Madam, she and I will go to Dunmow without you.

Apropos, as Mrs. Cambridge's beauty has kept so unfaded, and Mr. Cambridge's passion is so undiminished, and as they are good economists, I am astonished they have laid in no stock of bacon, when they could have it for asking.

Thursday night

Despairing, beside a clear stream
A shepherd forsaken was laid;

not very close to the stream, but within-doors in sight of it; for in this damp weather a lame old Colin cannot lie and despair with any comfort on a wet bank: but I smile against the grain, and am seriously alarmed at Thursday being come, and no letter! I dread one of you being ill, and then shall detest

THE PRESS

AT

STRAWBERRY-HILL

TO

Miſs MARY and Miſs AGNES BERRY.

TO MARY's Lips has ancient Rome
  Her pureſt Language taught;
And from the modern City home
  AGNES its pencil brought.

Rome's ancient Horace ſweetly chants
  Such Maids with lyric Fire;
Albion's old Horace ſings nor paints----
  He only can admire.

Still wou'd his Preſs their Fame record,
  So amiable the Pair is!
But ah! how vain to think *his* Word
  Can add a Straw to BERRYS!

THE PRESS TO THE BERRYS

detest the Duke of Northumberland's rapacious steward more than ever. Mr. Batt and the Abbé Nicholls dined with me to-day, and I could talk of you *en pais de connoissance*. They tried to persuade me that I have no cause to be in a fright about you; but I have such perfect faith in the kindness of both of you, as I have in your possessing every other virtue, that I cannot believe but some sinister accident must have prevented my hearing from you. I wish Friday was come! I cannot write about anything else till I have a letter.

Friday, 26th.—My anxiety increases daily, for still I have no letter; you cannot all three be ill, and if any one is, I should flatter myself another would have written, or if any accident has happened. Next to your having met with some ill luck, I should be mortified at being forgotten so suddenly. Of any other vexation I have no fear; so much goodness and good sense as you both possess would make me perfectly easy if I were really your husband. I must then suspect some accident, and shall have no tranquillity till a letter puts me out of pain. Jealous I am not, for two young ladies cannot have run away with their father to Gretna Green. Hymen, O Hymenaee! bring me good news to-morrow, and a direction too, or you do nothing.

Saturday.—Io Paean! Io Tonton! At last I have got a letter, and you are all well! And I am so pleased, that I forget the four uneasy days I have passed—at present I have neither time or paper to say more, for our post turns on its heel and goes out the instant it is come. I am in some distress still

still, for, thoughtless creature, you have sent me no direction—luckily Lady Cecilia told me yesterday you had bidden her direct to you to be left at the post-house at York, which was more than you told me; but I will venture. If you do receive this, I beseech you never forget, as you move about, to send me new directions.

Do not be frightened at the enormity of this, I do not mean to continue so fourpaginous in every letter. Mr. C.[1] has this instant come in, and would damp me if I were going to scribble more. Adieu, adieu, adieu all three.

Your dutiful son-in-law and most affectionate husband,

H. W.

P. S. I beg pardon, I see on the last side of your letter there is a direction.

133. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 71]

Strawberry Hill
June 23, 1789

Madam Hannah,—You are an errant reprobate, and grow wickeder and wickeder every day. You deserve to be treated like a *nègre;* and your favourite Sunday, to which you are so partial, that you treat the other poor six days of the week as if they had no souls to be saved, should, if I could have my will,

Shine no Sabbath-day for you.

Now

[1] Mr. Cambridge.—T.

Now, don't simper, and look as innocent as if virtue would not melt in your mouth—can you deny the following charges?

I lent you *The Botanic Garden*, and you returned it without writing a syllable, or saying where you were or whither you was going—I suppose for fear I should know how to direct to you—why, if I did send a letter after you, could not you keep it three months without an answer, as you did last year?

In the next place, you and your *nine* accomplices, who, by the way, are too good in keeping you company, have clubbed the prettiest poem [1] imaginable, and communicated it to Mrs. Boscawen, with injunctions not to give a copy of it—I suppose because you are ashamed of having written a panegyric—whenever you *do* compose a satire, you are ready enough to publish it—at least, whenever you do, you will din one to death with it.—But now, mind your perverseness; that very pretty novel poem, and I must own it is charming, have you gone and spoiled, flying in the faces of your best friends the Muses, and keeping no *measures* with them—I'll be shot if they dictated two of the best lines with two syllables too much in each—nay, you have weakened one of them,

Ev'n Gardiner's mind

is far more expressive than *steadfast* Gardiner's—and, as Mrs. Boscawen says, whoever knows anything of Gardiner could not want that superfluous epithet—and whoever does not would not be the wiser for your foolish insertion—Mrs. Boscawen did not call it foolish, but I do.

The

[1] *Bonner's Ghost.*

The second line, as Mesdemoiselles handed it to you, Miss, was,

And all be free and saved—

not *All be free and all be saved:* the second *all be* is a most unnecessary tautology. The poem was perfect and faultless, if you could have let it alone. I wonder how your mischievous flippancy could help maiming that most new and beautiful expression, *sponge of sins;* I should not have been surprised, as you love verses too full of feet, if you had changed it to *that scrubbing-brush of sins.*

Well, I will say no more now: but if you do not order me a copy of *Bonner's Ghost* incontinently, never dare to look my printing-house in the face again.—Or come, I'll tell you what; I will forgive all your enormities if you will let me print your poem. I like to filch a little immortality out of others, and the Strawberry Press could never have a better opportunity. I will not haggle for the public—I will be content with printing only two hundred copies, of which you shall have half, and I half.—It shall cost you nothing but a yes. I only propose this in case you do not mean to print it yourself. Tell me sincerely which you like—but as to not printing it at all, charming and unexceptionable as it is, you cannot be so preposterous.

I by no means have a thought of detracting from your own share in your own poem; but, as I do suspect that it caught some inspiration from your devout[1] perusal of *The Botanic Garden,* so I hope you will discover that *my* style is much improved

[1] This word is scratched out and omitted in the letter as hitherto printed, but can still be made out.—T.

improved by having lately studied Madame Piozzi's[1] *Travels* —there I dipped, and not in St. Gyles's Pound, where one would think she[2] had been educated.—Adieu!

Your friend,
Or, mortal foe,
As you behave on the present occasion,
H. WALPOLE.

134. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 71]

Ex Officinâ Arbutianâ
July 19, 1789

Such unwriting wives I never knew! and a shame it is for an author, and what is more, for a printer, to have a couple so unletteral. I can find time amidst all the hurry of my shop to write small quartos to them continually. In France, where nuptiality is not the virtue most in request, a wife will write to her consort, though the *doux billet* should contain but two sentences, of which I will give you a precedent. A lady sent the following to her spouse: 'Je vous écris, parce que je n'ai rien à faire; et je finis, parce que je n'ai rien à vous dire.' I do not wish for quite so laconic a *poulet;* besides, your Ladyships *can* write. Mrs. Damer dined here yesterday, and had just heard from you. Brevity, Mesdames, may be catching—don't pretend not to care, for you are dying for news from France, but not a spoonful shall you have from me to-day; and

[1] The name is scratched out in the original, but can still be read.—T.
[2] Altered (by Hannah More) in the original to 'this,' and the word 'author' inserted, to conceal the mention of Mrs. Piozzi.—T.

and if I was not a man of honour, though a printer, and had not promised you *Bonner's Ghost*, I would be as silent as if I were in Yorkshire. Remember too, that Miss Hannah More, though not so proper for the French Embassador's *fête* as Miss Gunning,[1] can teach Greek and Latin as well as any young lady in the north of England, and might make as suitable a companion for a typographer. I will say no more, for this *shall* be a short note.

Sunday night, late.

I break my word to myself, though you do not deserve it, for I have had no letter to-day from either of you, and now can have none till Tuesday; but I am just come from Richmond, where I have seen an authentic account of the horrible scene at Paris. There had been dismal accounts for three days, but I hoped they had been exaggerated. They are too true. The Duc de Luxembourg and his family are arrived in London, having escaped with difficulty, 300,000 livres being set on his head, as the same sum is on Marshal Broglie's, and 500,000 on the Comte d'Artois's. The people rose on this day se'nnight, seized all the arms they could find, searched convents, found stores of corn, and obliged the monks to deal it out at reasonable prices. They have beheaded the *Lieutenant de Police*, or the *Prévôt des Marchands*, or both, and attacked the Bastille, which the governor refused to surrender; and on the populace rushing

[1] Elizabeth, only child of General John Gunning, and niece of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll. In 1791 Miss Gunning became notorious in connection with her own and her mother's attempts to prove that the Marquises of Lorne and Blandford had offered her marriage. Both the so-called suitors denied the truth of Miss Gunning's statement, and she remained single till 1803, when she married a Major Plunkett.—T.

rushing in, he fired on them with four great guns loaded with nails, and killed 300 or 400, but they mastered him, and dragged him and his major to the Place de Grève, and chopped off their hands and heads. The *bourgeoisie*, however, have disarmed the mob, but have seized the arsenal, and the Hôtel de Ville and the treasure there, which they destine to pay the sums for the heads of the proscribed.

On Wednesday the King with only his two brothers went to the Assemblée Nationale, and offered to concur with them in any measures for restoring order. They returned him an answer by eighty deputies, but the result is not known. The Duke of Dorset's courier is not arrived, nobody, it is supposed, being suffered to go out of the city.

Marshal Broglie is encamped before Versailles with 25,000 men, who are said ready to support the King.

You will want to ask a thousand questions, which I could not answer—nor will I when I can, if neither of you will write to me.

I dined to-day at Mrs. Walsingham's with the Pen-hood, and to-morrow I am to carry thirty *Ghosts* to the Bishop of London. So I am finishing this at past midnight, and shall send it before I go to Mr. Ellis to be franked.

These two days have been very fine, and I trust have restored riding in Yorkshire. If I ever do receive another letter, I hope it will give me an account of restored health, for my anger is but a grain of mustard in comparison of my solicitude. Good night! good night!

It

135. To Miss Hannah More

[*Aetat* 72]

Berkeley Square
Feb. 20, 1790

It is very provoking that people must always be hanging or drowning themselves, or going mad, that you forsooth, Mistress, may have the diversion of exercising your pity and good nature, and charity, and intercession, and all that bead-roll of virtues that make you so troublesome and amiable, when you might be ten times more agreeable by writing things that would not cost one above half a crown at a time. You are an absolutely walking hospital, and travel about into lone and by-places, with your doors open to house stray casualties! I wish at least that you would have some children yourself, that you might not be plaguing one for all the pretty brats that are starving and friendless. I suppose it was some such goody two or three thousand years ago that suggested the idea of an alma-mater, suckling the three hundred and sixty-five bantlings of the Countess of Hainault. Well, as your newly-adopted pensioners have *two* babes, I insist on your accepting *two* guineas for them instead of one at present (that is, when you shall be present). If you cannot circumscribe your own charities, you shall not stint mine, Madam, who can afford it much better, and who must be dunned for alms, and do not scramble over hedges and ditches in searching for opportunities of flinging away my money on good works. I employ mine better at auctions, and in buying pictures and baubles, and hoarding curiosities

Berkeley Square
May 26. 1790.

Dear Sr

I am sorry I was out of town when you did me the favour of calling; I could have shown you a very Jesuitic letter from the Prelate in answer to Lady D's application at my request, of which I should have told you, if I had received any hope from it. I did not at all expect any success from her or my application: I would not advise you to apply, but I know that I have no credit, & as I obtain nothing but denials or evasions, I am always most unwilling to solicit what I have no chance of obtaining, & what I assure you nothing should make me ask for myself. I have not been averse from proving to you that I would have served you if I could; but Interest you perceive, I have none at all. I heartily wish your merit may find more substantial friends than your very insignificant

humble Sert
Ho Walpole

P.S.

I shall go out of town on Saturday for two or three days, which I only mention to prevent yr having the trouble of calling when you would not find me. I shall be absent from town again on the 3d 4th & fifth of June, but glad to see you before or after those days

curiosities, that in truth I cannot keep long, but that will last *for ever* in my catalogue, and make me immortal! Alas! will they cover a multitude of sins? Adieu! I cannot jest after *that* sentence.

Yours most sincerely,
HOR. WALPOLE.

136. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 73]

Berkeley Square
May 12, 1791

A letter from Florence (that of April 20th) does satisfy me about your dear nose, till I can see it with my own eyes; but I will own to you now that my alarm at first went much farther. I dreaded lest so violent a fall upon rubbish might not have hurt your head; though all your letters since have proved how totally that escaped any damage. Yet your great kindness in writing to me yourself so immediately did not tranquilize me, and only proved your good nature; that I had no high opinion of Italian surgeons—but I will not detail my departed fears, nor need I prove my attachment to you two. If you were really my wives, I could not be more generally applied to for accounts of you; of which I am proud. I should be ashamed if, at my age, it were a ridiculous attachment; but don't be sorry for having been circumstantial. My fears did not spring thence, nor did I suspect your not having told the whole—no! but I apprehended the accident might be worse than you knew yourself.

Poor

Poor Hugh Conway, though his life has long been safe, still suffers at times from his dreadful blow, and has not yet been able to come to town: nor would Lord Chatham's humanity put his ship into commission; which made him so unhappy, that poor Horatia, doting on him as she does, wrote to beg he might be employed; preferring her own misery in parting with him to what she saw him suffer. Amiable conduct! but, happily, her suit did not prevail.

I am not at all surprised at the private interviews between L. and C. I am persuaded that the first must and will take more part than he has yet seemed to do, and so will others too; but as speculations are but guesses, I will say no more on the subject now; nor on your English and Irish travellers, none of whom I know. I have one general wish, that you may be amused while you stay by the natives of any nation; and I thank you a thousand times for confirming your intention of returning by the beginning of November; which I should not desire *coolly*, but from the earnest wish of putting you in possession of Cliveden while I live: which everybody would approve, at least, not wonder at (Mr. Batt, to whom I have communicated my intention, does extremely); and the rest would follow of course, as I had done the same for Mrs. Clive.

I smiled at your making excuses for your double letter. Do you think I would not give twelve pence to hear more of you and your proceedings, than a single sheet would contain?

The Prince is recovered: that is all the domestic news, except a most memorable debate last Friday in the House of Commons

mons. Mr. Fox had most imprudently thrown out a panegyric on the French Revolution. His most considerable friends were much hurt, and protested to him against such sentiments. Burke went much farther, and vowed to attack those opinions. Great pains were taken to prevent such altercation, and the Prince of Wales is said to have written a dissuasive letter to Burke; but he was immovable; and on Friday, on the Quebec Bill,[1] he broke out, and sounded a trumpet against the plot, which he denounced as carrying on here. Prodigious clamour and interruption arose from Mr. Fox's friends; but he, though still applauding the French, burst into tears and lamentations on the loss of Burke's friendship, and endeavoured to make atonement; but in vain, though Burke wept too. In short, it was the most affecting scene possible; and undoubtedly *an unique* one, for both the commanders were in earnest and sincere. Yesterday, a second act was expected; but mutual friends prevailed, that the contest should not be renewed: nay, on the same bill, Mr. Fox made a profession of his faith, and declared he would venture his life in support of the *present* constitution by King, Lords, and Commons. In short, I never knew a wiser dissertation, if the newspapers deliver it justly; and I think all the writers in England cannot give more profound sense to Mr. Fox than he possesses. I know no more particulars, having seen nobody this morning yet.

I will deliver your message to Mr. P. Do you know he is not a little infected with (I mean no harm) the French disorder? Mrs. Buller says: 'did you ever know P. start anything

[1] Relative to a new constitution for Canada.—T.

thing of his own?' I will not tell her or him what you say of his letter. But what shall I tell you else? We have expected Mrs. D. from last night; and perhaps she may arrive before this sets out to-morrow.

You know my infinity of nephews and nieces—I am always at a wedding or christening. Two nights ago I was godfather with Lord Chatham and Princess Sophia of Gloucester (represented by Miss Dee) to Horace Churchill's[1] new-born son: it is christened Chatham Horace but is to be called by the latter —it could not, while young, be called *Chat, Chat!* Though all archdukes wear the Virgin's name first (with fifty others) nobody says, 'Come hither, Moll'—at least no mortal ever did, but the late Landgrave of Hesse, who had learned that vulgarism and used it about his wife, Princess Mary, when he spoke of her to her sisters Amalie and Caroline, who did not guess whom he meant.

Friday morning, May 13th.

Last night we were at Lady Fred. Campbell's—the usual cribbage party, Conways, Mount-Edgcumbes, Johnstones. At past ten Mrs. Damer was announced! Her parents ran down into the hall, and I scrambled down some of the stairs. She looks vastly well, was in great spirits, and not at all fatigued; though she came from Dover, had been twelve hours at sea from Calais, and had rested but four days at Paris from Madrid. We supped, and stayed till one o'clock; and I shall go to her as soon as I am dressed. Madrid and the Escurial, she

[1] Walpole's nephew.

she owns, have gained her a proselyte to painting, which her statuarism had totally engrossed—in her, no wonder. Of Titian she had no idea, nor have I a just one, though great faith, as at Venice all his works are now coal-black; but Rubens, she says, amazed her, and that in Spain he has even grace. Her father, yesterday morning, from pain remaining still in his shoulder from his fall, had it examined by Dr. Hunter; and a little bone of the collar was found to be broken, and he must wear his arm for some days in a sling.

Miss Boyle, I heard last night, had consented to marry Lord Henry Fitzgerald. I think they have both chosen well, but I have chosen better. Adieu! *Care spose!*

137. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat 73*]

Berkeley Square
May 26, 1791

I am rich in letters from you: I received that by Lord Elgin's courier first, as you expected, and its elder the next day. You tell me mine entertain you; *tant mieux.* It is my wish, but my wonder; for I live so very little in the world, that I do not know the present generation by sight: for, though I pass by them in the streets, the hats with valances, the folds above the chin of the ladies, and the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men, who have *levelled nobility* almost as much as the *mobility* in France have, have confounded all individuality. Besides, if I did go to public places and assemblies, which my going to roost earlier prevents, the bats and owls do not begin to

to fly abroad till far in the night, when they begin to see and be seen. However, one of the empresses of fashion, the Duchess of Gordon, uses fifteen or sixteen hours of her four-and-twenty. I heard her journal of last Monday. She first went to Handel's music in the Abbey; she then clambered over the benches, and went to Hastings's trial in the Hall; after dinner, to the play; then to Lady Lucan's assembly; after that to Ranelagh, and returned to Mrs. Hobart's faro-table; gave a ball herself in the evening of that morning, into which she must have got a good way; and set out for Scotland the next day. Hercules could not have achieved a quarter of her labours in the same space of time. What will the Great Duke think of our Amazons, if he has letters opened, as the Emperor was wont! One of our Camillas,[1] but in a freer style, I hear, he saw (I fancy, just before your arrival); and he must have wondered at the familiarity of the dame, and the nincompoop-hood of her Prince. Sir W.H. is arrived—his Nymph of the Attitudes[2] was too prudish to visit the rambling peeress.

Mrs. Cholmeley was so very good as to call on me again yesterday; Mr. French was with me, and fell in love with her understanding, and probably with her face too—but with that he did not trust me. He says we shall have Dr. Darwin's stupendous poem in a fortnight, of which you saw parts. Geo. Cholmondeley's wife, after a dreadful labour, is delivered of a dead child.

The rest of my letter must be literary; for we have no news

[1] Lady Craven.—T.
[2] The famous Lady Hamilton.

Lady Hamilton, by Romney

news. Boswell's book is gossiping; but, having numbers of proper names, would be more readable, at least by me, were it reduced from two volumes to one: but there are woful *longueurs*, both about his hero and himself, the *fidus Achates;* about whom one has not the smallest curiosity. But I wrong the original Achates: one is satisfied with his fidelity in keeping his master's secrets and weaknesses, which modern led-captains betray for their patron's glory and to hurt their own enemies: which Boswell has done shamefully, particularly against Mrs. Piozzi, and Mrs. Montagu, and Bishop Percy. Dr. Blagden says justly, that it is a new kind of libel, by which you may abuse anybody, by saying some dead person said so-and-so of somebody alive. Often, indeed, Johnson made the most brutal speeches to living persons; for though he was good-natured at bottom, he was very ill-natured at top. He loved to dispute to show his superiority. If his opponents were weak, he told them they were fools; if they vanquished him, he was scurrilous —to nobody more than to Boswell himself, who was contemptible for flattering him so grossly, and for enduring the coarse things he was continually vomiting on Boswell's own country, Scotland. I expected, amongst the excommunicated, to find myself, but am very gently treated. I never would be in the least acquainted with Johnson; or, as Boswell calls it, had not a just value for him; which the biographer imputes to my resentment for the Doctor's putting bad arguments (purposely, out of Jacobitism) into the speeches which he wrote fifty years ago for my father in the *Gentleman's Magazine*

zine; which I did not read then, or ever knew Johnson wrote till Johnson died, nor have looked at since. Johnson's blind Toryism and known brutality kept me aloof; nor did I ever exchange a syllable with him: nay, I do not think I ever was in a room with him six times in my days. The first time I think was at the Royal Academy. Sir Joshua said, 'Let me present Dr. Goldsmith to you'; he did. 'Now I will present Dr. Johnson to you.' 'No,' said I, 'Sir Joshua, for Dr. Goldsmith, pass—but you shall *not* present Dr. Johnson to me.' Some time after Boswell came to me, said Dr. J. was writing the *Lives of the Poets,* and wished I would give him anecdotes of Mr. Gray. I said, very coldly, I had given what I knew to Mr. Mason. B. hummed and hawed, and then dropped, 'I suppose you know Dr. J. does not admire Mr. Gray.' Putting as much contempt as I could into my look and tone, I said, 'Dr. Johnson don't!—humph!'—and with that monosyllable ended our interview. After the Doctor's death, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell sent an ambling circular-letter to me, begging subscriptions for a monument for him—the two last, I think, impertinently; as they could not but know my opinion, and could not suppose I would contribute to a monument for one who had endeavoured, poor soul! to degrade my friend's superlative poetry. I would not deign to write an answer; but sent down word by my footman, as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe. In the two new volumes Johnson says, and very probably did, or is made to say, that Gray's poetry is *dull,* and that he was

was a *dull* man! The same oracle dislikes Prior, Swift, and Fielding. If an elephant could write a book, perhaps one that had read a great deal would say that an Arabian horse is a very clumsy, ungraceful animal. Pass to a better chapter!

Burke has published another pamphlet[1] against the French Revolution, in which he attacks it still more grievously. The beginning is very good; but it is not equal, nor quite so injudicious as parts of its predecessor; is far less brilliant, as well as much shorter: but, were it ever so long, his mind overflows with such a torrent of images, that he cannot be tedious. His invective against Rousseau is admirable, just, and new. Voltaire he passes almost contemptuously. I wish he had dissected Mirabeau too; and I grieve that he has omitted the violation of the consciences of the clergy, nor stigmatized those universal plunderers, the National Assembly, who gorge themselves with eighteen livres a day; which to many of them would, three years ago, have been astonishing opulence.

When you return I shall lend you three volumes in quarto of another work, with which you will be delighted. They are state letters in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Mary, Elizabeth, and James; being the correspondence of the Talbot and Howard families, given by a Duke of Norfolk to the Heralds' office; where they have lain for a century neglected, buried under dust, and unknown, till discovered by a Mr. Lodge, a genealogist, who, to gratify his passion, procured to be made a Pursuivant. Oh, how curious they are! Henry seizes

[1] *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.*—T.

seizes an alderman who refused to contribute to a benevolence; sends him to the army on the Borders; orders him to be exposed in the front line; and if that does not do, to be treated with the utmost rigour of military discipline. His daughter Bess is not less a Tudor. The mean, unworthy treatment of the Queen of Scots is striking; and you will find how Elizabeth's jealousy of her crown and her avarice were at war, and how the more ignoble passion predominated. But the most amusing passage is one in a private letter, as it paints the awe of children for their parents a *little* differently from modern habitudes. Mr. Talbot, second son of the Earl of Shrewsbury, was a member of the House of Commons, and was married. He writes to the Earl his father, and tells him that a young woman of a very good character has been recommended to him for chambermaid to his wife, and if his Lordship does not disapprove of it, he will hire her. There are many letters of news, that are very entertaining too—but it is nine o'clock, and I must go to Lady Cecilia's.

Friday

The Conways, Mrs. Damer, the Farrens, and Lord Mount-Edgcumbe supped at the Johnstones'. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe said excellently, that 'Mademoiselle D'Éon is her own widow.' I wish I had seen you both in your court-*plis*, at your presentation; but that is only one wish amongst a thousand.

East winds and blights have succeeded our April spring, as you guessed, but though I have been at Strawberry every week, I have caught no cold, I kindly thank you. Adieu!

I

138. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 73]

Strawberry Hill
June 14, 1791

I pity you! what a dozen or fifteen unentertaining letters are you going to receive! for here I am, unlikely to have anything to tell you worth reading. You had better come back incontinently—but pray do not prophesy any more; you have been the death of our summer, and we are in close mourning for it in coals and ashes. It froze hard last night: I went out for a moment to look at my haymakers, and was starved. The contents of an English June are hay and ice, orange-flowers and rheumatisms! I am now cowering over the fire. Mrs. Hobart had announced a rural breakfast at Sans-Souci last Saturday; nothing being so pastoral as a fat grandmother in a row of houses on Ham Common. It rained early in the morning: she dispatched post-boys, for want of cupids and zephyrs, to stop the nymphs and shepherds who tend their flocks in Pall Mall and St. James's Street; but half of them missed the couriers and arrived. Mrs. Montagu was more splendid yesterday morning, and breakfasted seven hundred persons on opening her great room, and the room with the hanging of feathers. The King and Queen had been with her last week. I should like to have heard the orations she had prepared on the occasion. I was neither city-mouse nor country-mouse. I did dine at Fulham on Saturday with the Bishop of London. Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Hannah More were

were there; and Dr. Beattie,[1] whom I had never seen. He is quiet, simple, and cheerful, and pleased me. There ends my tale, this instant Tuesday! How shall I fill a couple of pages more by Friday morning! Oh, ye ladies on the Common, and ye uncommon ladies in London, have pity on a poor gazetteer, and supply me with eclogues or royal panegyrics! Moreover —or rather more under—I have had no letter from you these ten days, though the east wind has been as constant as Lord Derby.[2] I say not this in reproach, as you are so kindly punctual; but as it stints me from having a single paragraph to answer. I do not admire specific responses to every article; but they are great resources on a dearth.

Madam de Boufflers is ill of a fever, and the Duchesse de Biron goes next week to Switzerland;—*mais qu'est-ce que cela vous fait?* I must eke out this with a few passages that I think will divert you from the heaviest of all books, Mr. Malone's Shakespeare, in ten thick octavos, with notes, that are an extract of all the opium that is spread through the works of all the bad playwrights of that age:—mercy on the poor gentleman's patience! Amongst his other indefatigable researches, he has discovered some lists of effects in the custody of the property-man to the Lord Admiral's company of players, in 1598. Of those effects he has given eight pages—you shall be off for a few items; viz. 'My Lord Caffe's (Caiaphas) gerchen (jerkin) and his hoose (hose); one rocke, one tombe, one Hellemought (Hell-mouth), two stepelles and one chyme of

[1] James Beattie (1735-1803), the poet, friend of Gray and Johnson.
[2] To Miss Farren.—T.

THE PRINTER's FAREWELL

TO STRAWBERRY-HILL.

ADIEU! ye Groves and Gothic Tow'rs,
Where I have ſpent my youthful Hours,
Alas! I find in vain:
Since he who could my Age protect,
By ſome myſterious, ſad neglect,
Has left me to complain!

For thirty Years of Labour paſt,
To meet ſuch ſlight Reward at laſt,
Has added to my Cares:
To quit the quiet Scenes of Life,
T'encounter Bus'neſs, Buſtle, Strife,
Hangs heavy on my Years.

Farewell! my PRINTING-HOUSE, farewell!
Where I no more ſhall calmly dwell,
Within thy peaceful Door:
No more in Converſation free,
Enjoy my Friend and ſip my Tea;
Ah! no; thoſe Days are o'er.

On thee, my Fellow-Lab'rour, dear,
My PRESS, I drop the ſilent Tear
Of Pity, for thy Lot;
For thou, like me, by Time art worn,
Like me, too, thou art left forlorn,
Neglected and forgot!

October, 1797. T. K.

of belles, one chain of dragons, two coffenes, one bulle's head, one vylter, one goste's crown, and one frame for the heading in black Jone; one payer of stayers for Fayeton, and bowght a robe for to goo invisabell.' The pair of stairs for Phaeton reminds one of Hogarth's strollers dressing in a barn, where Cupid on a ladder is reaching Apollo's stockings, that are hanging to dry on the clouds; as the steeples do of a story in *L'Histoire du Théâtre François:* Jodelet, who not only wrote plays, but invented the decorations, was to exhibit of both before Henry the Third. One scene was to represent a view of the sea, and Jodelet had bespoken two *rochers;* but not having time to rehearse, what did he behold enter on either side of the stage, instead of two *rochers,* but two *clochers!* Who knows but my Lord Admiral bought *them?*

Thursday, 16th, Berkeley Square.

I am come to town for one night, having promised to be at Mrs. Buller's this evening with Mrs. Damer, and I believe your friend Mrs. Cholmeley, whom I have seen two or three times lately and like much. Three persons have called on me since I came, but have not contributed a tittle of news to my journal. If I hear nothing to-night, this must depart, empty as it is, to-morrow morning, as I shall to Strawberry; I hope without finding a new mortification, as I did last time. Two companies had been to see my house last week; and one of the parties, as vulgar people always see with the ends of their fingers, had broken off the end of my invaluable eagle's bill, and to conceal their mischief, had pocketed the piece. It is true

true it had been restored at Rome, and my comfort is that Mrs. Damer can repair the damage—but did the fools know that? It almost provokes me to shut up one's house, when obliging begets injury!

Friday noon

We supped at Mrs. Buller's with only the four Edgecumbs and Jerningham, and this moment I receive your 35th, to which I have nothing to answer, but that I believe Fox and Burke are not very cordial; though I do not know whether there has been any formal reconciliation or not. The Parliament is prorogued; and we shall hear no more of them, I suppose, for some months; nor have I learnt anything new, and am returning to Strawberry, and must finish.

139. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 74]

Berkeley Square
Oct. 20, 1791

I wrote to you a very bit of a letter, but two days ago, in a great hurry from being in fear of being too late for the post from various clashing circumstances. This therefore is but the second part of that letter, or rather an explanation of it. I think I did tell you that I was come to town on a sudden, one of my footmen having pawned a little of my plate and run away—this was very true, and a woful story, as you will hear —but I had other motives. I have had for some time a very troublesome erysipelas on my left arm, which I had not only neglected, but had scratched so unmercifully, that it had become

a

a very serious affair. Mr. Gilchrist, my apothecary at Twickenham, is dangerously ill at Tunbridge—and on Monday I had a slight attack of the gout in my foot. Dreading to be laid up there where I had no assistance nor advice (with some other fears which *you* may guess), I determined to come away—and did—which has proved fortunate. Mr. Watson, my oracle, attends my arm, and it is so much better that, though with my foot on a stool the whole evening of yesterday, I passed it at Mrs. Damer's, and supped there with Lord and Lady Frederic Campbell, Mrs. and Miss Farren, Lord Derby, and Miss Jennings, and stayed there till past twelve—and to-day my foot is quite well and my arm getting well—but now comes the dreadful part of my story.

As I rose out of bed, Philip[1] told me he would not disturb my rest last night, but before I came home, a messenger had arrived from Strawberry to say that at five yesterday in the evening one of my gardener's men had in my wood-walk discovered my poor servant John's body hanged in a tree near the chapel and already putrefied! so he must have dispatched himself on the Friday morning on which he disappeared—I had then learnt to my astonishment that he had not even taken away his hat with him, and had dropped down from the library window, a dangerous height! All this it seems was occasioned by the housekeeper, as she always does, locking all the doors below as soon as she knows everybody is in bed—and thus he could not get his hat out of the servants' hall—if, poor soul! he did look for it—probably not!

This

[1] Walpole's valet.

This remain of shame and principle goes to my heart!—happily for me, I had not even mentioned to him the discovery that had been made of his pawning my plate, and Philip and Kirgate [1] had urged him in the kindest manner to confess it on Thursday evening, which he then would not—but a few hours afterwards owned it to the coachman, and told him he would go away. I since hear he had contracted other debts, and probably feared all would be found out—and he should be arrested and thrown into prison—by me I am sure he would not, for I had not even thought of discharging him—but should rather have tried by pardoning to reclaim him, for I do not think he was more than eighteen! [2] nay, on Thursday evening, after I knew the story, I had let him go behind my coach to Richmond as he used to do, and had not spoken a harsh word to him.

I beg your pardon for dwelling on this melancholy detail, but you may imagine how much it has affected me. It is fortunate for me I was absent from Strawberry when the body was found. Kirgate is gone thither this evening to meet the coroner to-morrow; the corpse was carried into my chapel in the garden—I shall certainly not return thither before Monday at soonest. My greatest comfort is that I cannot on the strictest inquiry find that even an angry word had been used towards the poor young man. I may be blamed for taking his fault so calmly—but I know how my concern would be aggravated if a bitter syllable from me had contributed to his despair!

I

[1] Walpole's printer and secretary.
[2] Walpole's depression may have been deepened by the similarities of this case to Chatterton's.

I have written all this, that you may know the exact situation of my mind, and because I conceal nothing from you, and lest from the abrupt conclusion of my last, you should suspect I was ill. I do assure you I have not the smallest sensation of pain anywhere, and my arm will be healed in two or three days, and now does not confine me at home. The impression of the unhappy accident will wear off, as I neither contributed to it, nor could foresee it nor prevent it. I talk of nothing else to you, because, except of you, as you see, and of your journey, I have for these five last days been occupied only by that adventure, and by my own arm. I write to Brussels still, as I compute that this must arrive there before you; but to-morrow or Saturday I shall hope for another letter; and amidst my distresses I am not insensible to the hope of November having a most happy era in store for me! Adieu! Adieu!

P. S. As I understand that you do not go to Basle, but have ordered the letters sent thither to meet you at Ausbourg, here are my dates, that you may know whether you receive all. To Venice, Sept. 6; to Basle, Sept. 12, 20, 27; to Ausbourg, Oct., 1, 14; to Brussels, 18, 20.

140. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 74]
Dec. 11, 1791

You have hurt me excessively! We had passed a most agreeable evening, and then you poisoned all by one cruel word. I see you are too proud to like to be obliged by me, though you see

see that my greatest, and the only pleasure I have left, is to make you and your sister a little happier if I can; and *now*, when it is a little more in my power, you cross me *in trifles even*, that would compensate for the troubles that are fallen on me. I thought my age would allow me to have a friendship that consisted in nothing but distinguishing merit—you allow the vilest of all tribunals, the newspapers, to decide how short a way friendship may go! [1] Where is your good sense in this conduct? and will you punish me, because what you nor mortal being can prevent, a low anonymous scribbler, pertly takes a liberty with your name? I cannot help repeating that you have hurt me!

141. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 74]

I am in the utmost anxiety to know how you do. I dread lest what I meant kindly should have made you ill. I saw the struggle of both your noble minds in submitting to oblige me, and therefore all the obligation is on my side. You both have made the greatest sacrifice to me; I have made none to you—on the contrary, I relieve my own mind whenever I think I can ward off any future difficulty from you, though not a ten thousandth part of what I would do were it in my power. All I can say is, that you must know by your own minds how happy you have made mine, and sure you will not regret bestowing happiness on one so attached to you, and attached so reasonably

[1] One of the newspapers of the day had apparently suggested that the Berrys' friendship for Walpole was of an interested nature.—T.

Sketch of Goodwood by Mary Berry

reasonably; for where could I have made so just a choice, or found two such friends? What did I not feel for both! *Your* tears and Agnes's agitation, divided between the same nobleness, and her misery for your sufferings, which is ever awake, would attach me more to both, if that were possible. Dearest souls, do not regret obliging one so devoted to you—it is the only sincere satisfaction I have left; and be assured that till to-day, I have, though I said nothing, had nothing but anxiety since your father's illness, so impatient have I been for what I received but yesterday! Adieu!

142. To John Pinkerton

[*Aetat* 74]

Berkeley Square
Dec. 26, 1791 [1]

As I am sure of the sincerity of your congratulations, I feel much obliged by them, though what has happened destroys my tranquillity; and, if what the world reckons advantages could compensate the loss of peace and ease, would ill indemnify me, even by them. A small estate, loaded with debt, and of which I do not understand the management, and am too old to learn, a source of lawsuits amongst my near relations, though not affecting me; endless conversations with lawyers, and packets of letters to read every day and answer—all this weight of new business is too much for the rag of life that yet hangs about me, and was preceded by three weeks of anxiety about my unfortunate

[1] Walpole had just become fourth Earl of Orford through the death of his nephew.

tunate nephew, and a daily correspondence with physicians and mad-doctors, falling upon me when I had been out of order ever since July. Such a mass of troubles made me very seriously ill for some days, and has left me and still keeps me so weak and dispirited, that, if I shall not soon be able to get some repose, my poor head or body will not be able to resist. For the empty title, I trust you do not suppose it is anything but an encumbrance, by larding my busy mornings with idle visits of interruption, and which, when I am able to go out, I shall be forced to return. Surely no man of seventy-four, unless superannuated, can have the smallest pleasure in sitting at home in his own room, as I almost always do, and being called by a new name!

It will seem personal, and ungrateful too, to have said so much about my own *triste* situation, and not to have yet thanked you, Sir, for your kind and flattering offer of letting me read what you have finished of your History; but it was necessary to expose my position to you, before I could venture to accept your proposal, when I am so utterly incapable of giving a quarter of an hour at a time to what I know, by my acquaintance with your works, will demand all my attention, if I wish to reap the pleasure they are formed to give me. It is most true that for these seven weeks I have not read seven pages, but letters, states of accounts, cases to be laid before lawyers, accounts of farms, &c., &c., and those subject to mortgages. Thus are my mornings occupied: in an evening my relations and a very few friends come to me; and, when they are gone, I have about an hour to midnight to write answers to letters for the

the next day's post, which I had not time to do in the morning. This is actually my case now. I happened to be quitted at ten o'clock, and would not lose the opportunity of thanking you, not knowing when I could command another hour.

I by no means would be understood to decline your obliging offer, Sir; on the contrary, I accept it joyfully, if you can trust me with your manuscript for a little time, should I have leisure to read it but by small snatches, which would be wronging you, and would break all connection in my head. Criticism you are too great a writer to want; and to read critically is far beyond my present power. Can a scrivener, or a scrivener's hearer, be a judge of composition, style, profound reasoning, and new lights and discoveries, &c.? But my weary hand and breast must finish. May I ask the favour of your calling on me any morning, when you shall happen to come to town? You will find the new-old Lord exactly the same admirer of yours.

143. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 74]
Strawberry Hill
June 27, 1792

The wet and cold weather has so retarded my recovery, Madam, that if Strawberry had had a dry thread to its back, and I had not been so unwell ever since I came hither, I should have proposed to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory to honour me with a visit—yet though that eternal weeper the month of June has certainly done me no good, I need not look beyond myself to account for my weakness. Almost half a century of gout

gout, with the addition of a quarter of one, would undermine a stronger frame than mine; and if I live to have another fit, it will probably for the remnant confine me to my own house. As I can but just creep about, I have less reason than most people now to complain of the climate; and as I love to find out consolations, I have discovered that nature, as a compensation, has given us verdure and coal-mines in lieu of summer; and, as I can afford to keep a good fire, and have a beautiful view from my window, why should I complain? I do not wish to amble to Ham Common and be disappointed of a pastoral at Mrs. Hobart's. Poor lady! She has already miscarried of two fêtes of which she was big, and yet next minute she was pregnant of another. Those *fausses couches* and Mrs. Jordan's epistle to her, and daily as well as nightly robberies, have occasioned as much cackling in this district as if a thousand hen-roosts had been disturbed at once. Three coaches coming in society, with a horseman besides, from the play at Richmond, were robbed last week by a squadron of seven footpads, close to Mr. Cambridge's. If some check is not put to the hosts of banditti, Mr. T. Paine[1] will soon be able to raise as well-disciplined an army as he could wish. But how can I talk even of the outrages that one foresees in speculation, when one reads the recent accounts of those of the Tuileries.[2] What barbarity in the monsters of Paris not at once to massacre the King and Queen, who have suffered a thousand deaths for three

[1] Thomas Paine (1737-1809), the American, author of *The Rights of Man.*

[2] On June 10 the Tuileries was attacked and captured by an armed mob. The king was insulted and was in great danger. He was saved partly by the intervention of some deputies popular with the people, and partly by his own coolness and courage.—T.

three years together, trembling for themselves, for their children, and for each other! I almost hate the Kings of Hungary and Prussia as much as the detestable Jacobins do, for not being already at the gates of Paris—ay, and while they suffer those wretches to exist, for conniving at the Tisiphone of the north! [1] They tolerate a diabolic anarchy and countenance the destruction of the most amiable and most noble of all revolutions that ever took place. How can one make an option between monarchs and mobs!

Well! with all my lofty airs, so little is my mind, Madam, that I can turn from horror at mighty convulsions to indignation at puny spite and vulgar malice. How contemptible is the National Assembly! Not content with annihilating, vilifying, plundering and driving away their nobility, they have wreaked their paltry spleen on the title-deeds and genealogies of the old families, and deprived the exiles of the miserable satisfaction of knowing who were their ancestors. Yet it will not surprise me if, as after burning the Bastille, they have crammed Orleans with state prisoners, they should turn the galleys into a Heralds' Office, and, like Cromwell, create Hewson the cobbler, and such heroes, dukes and peers!

Thursday

I was interrupted yesterday, Madam, and am now going to London, not as you kindly advise, because Berkeley Square is wholesomer than the country (for *to-day* the weather is brave and shining, and what for want of sterling summer, one may call

[1] The Empress's designs on Poland were tolerated by Prussia and Austria, both of whom were to profit by a further partition.—T.

call—almost—hot); but to receive money; which I have not done yet from my estate, or rather for selling one; out of the wreck of my nephew's fortune. Some lands that he had bought in the Fens, to *adorn* the parsonage-hovel that he inhabited at Eriswell, escaped and fell to me—by not being entailed, or pocketed, or remembered, and I have sold them for two thousand guineas. This will not enrich me, but will pay a fine for church lands that I must renew, in addition to the encumbrances charged on me for repayment of my own fortune and my brother's; the latter of which I certainly did not receive, nor either of us either, till precisely forty years after they had been bequeathed! How little did I think of ever being master of fen-lands and church lands, the latter of which I always abominated, and did not covet the former! I betray my ignorance in figures and calculations on every transaction; but, thank my stars, can laugh at myself, as much as I suppose my lawyers and agents do at me, especially when I tell them I care not how little I receive, provided my new wealth does not draw my private fortune into debt, which I have destined to those who will want it; and therefore I still crawl about with my pair of horses, and will not add a postillion, till at the end of the year I shall know whether I really am to receive anything or not. This is the sum of my worldly prudence, Madam, and I am as indifferent about the balance of the estate, as I was about the title of (though not of being your Ladyship's ever devoted servant)

ORFORD.

Oh

144. To the Rev. Robert Nares[1]

[*Aetat* 74]

Strawberry Hill
Sept. 12, 1792

Oh, Sir, what horrible tragedies since I had the pleasure of seeing you! I would write in red ink, as only suitable to such deeds, would it not look like using a Parisian dagger—a second and a third St. Bartélemi in the same town!—and the same town to have plunged into such an ocean of blood after wading through three years of gore! Every day refines on the barbarity of the former. On the 4th of August seven thousand persons at least were murdered—the tigers could not rest a full month: on the third of this they butchered four thousand defenceless prisoners[2] of both sexes, all untried, and all confined by jealousy and suspicion—amongst these were 120 conscientious priests, whose sole crime was to have preferred beggary to perjury—too familiar to the perpetrators, who enforce new oaths to every new-fangled system, and consequently are every time perjured. Amongst the victims was the good old Cardinal de la Rochefoucault,[3] past fourscore, and the Archbishop of Arles, guilty of the same virtues.

The

[1] Robert Nares (1753-1829), at this time chaplain to the Duke of York, and Assistant Preacher at Lincoln's Inn. Nares was afterwards Archdeacon of Strafford and Canon of Lichfield. In 1793 he established the *British Critic*. He was also successively Assistant Librarian and Keeper of MSS. at the British Museum. He published his well-known *Glossary* in 1822.—T.

[2] The number of the victims of the 'Journées de Septembre' is exaggerated by Walpole. One thousand eighty-nine persons appear to have been massacred in Paris, including 200 priests.—T.

[3] Walpole was mistaken as to the Cardinal Dominique de la Rochefoucauld, who emigrated after the '10th of August.' He was at this time seventy-nine years of age, and died in 1800. Two prelates of the La Rochefoucauld family, however, were

The ferocity that assassinated the Princess de Lamballe,[1] is unexampled. In her terror she lost her senses—the monsters paused till she came to herself, that she might feel the whole of her sufferings! The epilogue to her martyrdom was scarce less horrible. They forced the King and Queen to stand at the window and behold the trunkless head on a pike!—and this, in that delicate Paris, that has always reproached our theatre with being too sanguinary—oh no, to be sure they required that our actors and actresses should commit actual murders on the stage. Perhaps you suppose that barbarity's invention has been exhausted—by no means—at least in the newest edition of the Jacobin Code, it is said, 'When thou committest murder, add the luxury of making the nearest relations of the sufferer witnesses to his sufferings'—accordingly, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, one of the most zealous patriarchs of the Revolution, growing shocked at the increasing enormities, quitted the party last July, and was retired with his family to the seat of his mother the Duchesse d'Anville, who had also been a staunch republican. Jacobin vengeance and Jacobin emissaries pursued him thither, and butchered him and his nephew, a youth—but previously compelled the Duke's mother and wife, this to behold her husband, the other her son and grandson, murdered before their eyes.

My pen is weary of recounting such hellish enormities—many of which you probably knew before—but I repeat them to

massacred during the 'Journées de Septembre'—François Joseph de la Rochefoucauld-Bayers (b. 1735), Bishop of Beauvais, and his brother, Pierre Louis, Bishop of Saintes.—T.

[1]She was murdered in the prison of La Force.—T.

to whet your indignation—you promised me to renew your honest labours—but your pen you must dip in gall. Before, you wrote with temper and moderation, and the dulled public had no taste left for excellent sense and judgement. You must strike to make them feel, and lenitives will not work on the populace, who swallow poisons every day from Jacobin agents both French and domestic. It is the duty of every honest man to impress a sense of these horrors as much as he can, especially before servants at table, that they may have arguments to combat the enemy. Retail my facts, but do not let my letter be seen out of your own hands, nor would I by any means have you own what you write—Jacobins have long pikes as well as stilettos, and I will indubitably not counsel you to do what I would not do myself, who am with most sincere esteem and admiration,

Dear Sir,
Your obedient humble servant
ORFORD.

145. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 75]

Strawberry Hill
Dec. 7, 1792

Your Ladyship has made me smile beyond my Lord Chesterfield's allowed simper, by sending me to take my seat in the House of Lords out of tenderness for my character; if serious,

I should not doubt your sincerity; but as you can look grave and soften your voice, when you have a mind to banter your friends, I rather think you were willing to try whether I have the lurking vanity of supposing myself of any importance. Indeed I have not; on the contrary, I know that having determined never to take that unwelcome seat, I should only make myself ridiculous, by fancying it could *signify* a straw whether I take it or not. If I have anything of character, it must dangle on my being consistent. I quitted and abjured Parliament near thirty years ago: I never repented, and I will not contradict myself now. It is not in the House of Lords that I will *rise* again; I will keep my dry bones for the general review day. A good lady [1] last year was delighted at my becoming a peer, and said, 'I hope you will get an Act of Parliament for putting down faro.' As if *I* could make Acts of Parliament! and could I, it would be very consistent too in me, who for some years played more at faro than anybody.

A wholesome spirit is arisen, and no wonder. The French have given warnings enough to property to put it on its guard. I have been too precipitate in my predictions, and therefore am cautious of conjecturing; yet, if my reasoning was too quick, it was not ill-founded; and as famine is striding over France, delusion's holiday will stop short, and give place to bitter scenes at its native home, which may save Europe from returning to primitive desolation. Abominable as the government of France was, it is plain that speculative philosophers were

[1] The learned Mrs. Carter.—T.

were the most unfit of all men to produce a salutary reformation. The French, by antecedent, as well as by recent proofs, have never been fit to be *unchained at once*, so innate is their savage barbarity. What ignorance of human nature to proclaim to twenty-four millions of people, that all laws are impositions; and what medium have those mad dictators[1] been able to find between laws and the violence of force? They will experience the reign of the latter; and perhaps go through all the revolutions of military despotism that have afflicted Egypt for so many ages. If my memory does not fail me, the *shepherd* kings of that country, who I suppose were *philosophers*, were the first tyrants deposed. Accustomed to cut the throats of their sheep, and versed in nothing but star-gazing, and hoisted from poverty to power, I do not wonder they applied their butchering knife to their subjects, and massacred away, that the rest of their people and flocks might have fairer equality of pasture. Condorcet[2] is just such a shepherd.

The city of London does not seem at all disposed to be reformed by the *Académies de Sciences et de Belles-Lettres*. I always thought those tribunals most impertinent; but did not just conceive that they would spawn legions of Huns and Vandals; but extremes meet, and incense and assassination have sprung out of the same dunghill! The servility and gross adulation of that nation persuaded their kings that they were all

[1] Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and Collot-d'Herbois were the most prominent persons in France at this time.—T.

[2] Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat (1743-1794), Marquis de Condorcet, celebrated as a geometrician. He was arrested in April 1794, and committed suicide in prison.—T.

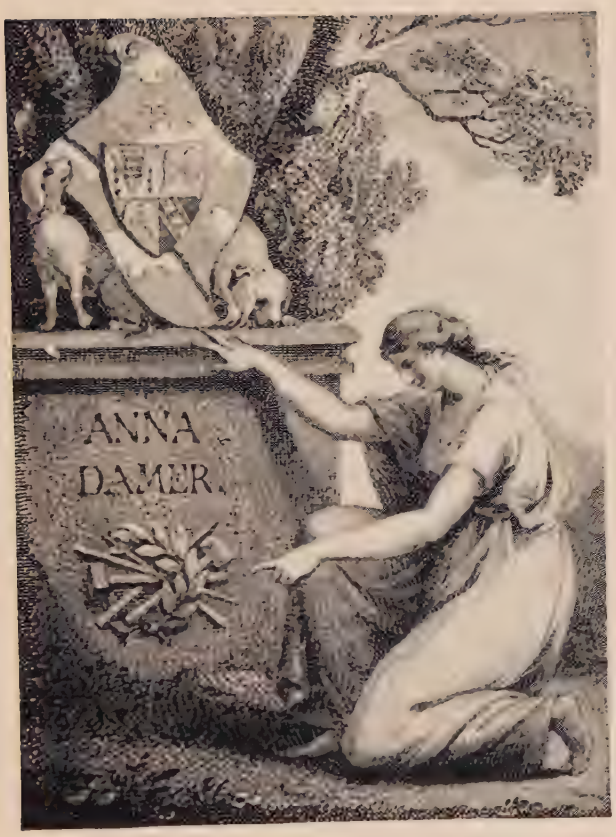
all-wise and omnipotent; and their kings being but men, and *French men*, no wonder they were intoxicated and arrogant. Is not Dumouriez already a sketch of Louis Quatorze? And is not every brawler in the National Assembly as vain and insolent as Marshal Villars, who, though having witnessed all the victories and modesty of the Duke of Marlborough, plumed himself more on one very inferior combat,[2] gained after Marlborough was withdrawn, than our hero did after years of success!

Knowing a little of human nature, as I have lived to do, and how unfit one man or all are to be trusted with unlimited power (and consequently I remain neither a royalist nor a republican), I must admire our own constitution, that invented, or rather has formed, three powers, which battling one another with opinions, not with force, are more likely to keep the balance fluctuating than to make one scale preponderate by flinging the sword, like Brennus the Gaul, into the one that he chose should be the heaviest.

I wish there were any other topic of discourse than politics; but as one can hear, one can talk nor think on anything else. It has pervaded all ranks and ages. A miss, not fourteen, asked Miss Agnes Berry lately whether she was aristocrat or democrat? And a waiter at the 'Toy,' at Hampton Court, said of a scraper at the last ball, that he had a fine finger on the organization of a violin. It is provoking that we should catch even their fashionable and absurd pedantry. Adieu! Madam.

I

[2] The battle of Denain (July 24, 1712), in which he defeated Prince Eugene.—*T.*



Mrs. Damer's Bookplate

146. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 76]

Strawberry Hill
Tuesday, Oct. 29, 1793

I have just received yours of the 26th, and begin to answer it directly, though not knowing when I shall dispatch it, as I cannot satisfy you nor myself in half we want to know about the most interesting of all events, and my greatest astonishment consists in the execrable monsters having let enough be known to consecrate Marie Antoinette to immortal glory, and to devote Paris and all its fiends to the horror and detestation of posterity.

You bid me go to the Princesse d'Hennin and learn what I can. No, indeed; I must be well convinced of the purity of sentiments of any French man or woman, before I would go to them. I would rather fly their sight!—yet mine is not grief *now*. No, it is all admiration and enthusiasm! The last days of that unparalleled Princess were so superior to any death ever exhibited or recorded, that for the sake of her glory, I think, unless I could restore her to happiness, to her children, to her untainted friends, and could see her triumph over the murderous mobs that have massacred her, I would not revive her if I could. When did there ever exist such august simplicity! What mind was ever, I will not say so firm, but so perfectly mistress of its own thoughts and intentions, that could be attentive to every circumstance and distracted by none? Think of all that was comprehended in that question to the monsters called her counsellors, but certainly allotted

allotted to her as defamatory spies, 'Had she assumed too much dignity, as she passed to her trial, for she had noticed one of the furies, who said, "How proud she is"?' It proved her unaltered presence of mind, and that she was ready to condescend, if it would better become her. What hero, philosopher, or martyr had equal possession of himself in similar moments? None, none, not one! And then recollect the length of her sufferings, her education, exaltation to happiness, and supreme power, her sudden fall, the disappointments she had met, the ingratitude and treachery she had experienced, the mortifications and insults heaped upon her, and studiously, maliciously, aggravated for five years together; the murder of husband, the miseries of and terrors for her children: the total deprivation of all decent comforts, and, perhaps the greatest cruelty of all, not to have had one friend; but a thousand times worse, to have been at every moment in the hands of the most unfeeling jailors. Sum up all this mass of woes, and perhaps thousands more of which we never heard, and then see this phoenix rise superior to hosts of torturing spiteful fiends, and hear her pronounce the most sublime word that ever passed through human lips. When *they* (I have no adequate epithet for them) had declared sentence and asked her what she had to say, she said, 'Rien.' Too calm, too sensible, too collected, and unshaken, she was above fear, indignation, and solicitation, and accountable only to herself, she showed that such a host of miscreants was not worthy of knowing a syllable of what passed in perhaps the greatest mind that ever existed. Her invincible patience was all that appeared, and that was a negative, but as unvaried

unvaried as all her illustrious virtues and great qualities, on which rancour and persecution have not been able to fix a speck of stain—let history or legend produce a similar model!

These are the effusions of my heart, not dictated by the impulse of the moment, but the result of my cool reflections of three days. I trust them in perfect confidence to your honour, and exact from the fidelity of your friendship that you will not communicate nor read them to any mortal but your father and sister, nor let this paper pass out of your own hands, nor suffer a tittle of it to be transcribed. I like that you two should know my sentiments on all important topics, but I extend this confidence not a jot farther. I firmly believe every word I have asserted, because all the facts come from the barbarians themselves—but as I cannot be positively sure they are true I will not place my veracity on a possibility of having been misinformed, and therefore I depend on your not committing me by showing my letter—I repeat it earnestly, *to nobody but your father and sister*, and beg you will assure me that you have not. I do not mind your reading trifles out of my dispatches, though certainly calculated for nobody but you two —but this letter I do most seriously restrain from all other eyes.

Tuesday, midnight.

Mrs. Damer came to me at dinner to-day, and goes to London to-morrow. I was engaged to Lady Betty Mackinsy, and she went thither with me in the most deplorable of all nights—as bad as that when the Conways and I were detained so late at Cliveden and I stepped over my shoes into the water.

We

We heard nothing quite new: Nieuport is reckoned safe and Ostend safer, both which were reported taken. Mr. Batt, whom I met last night at Cambridge's, is as confident of the safety of Toulon. He, not Lord Hood, inquired much after you. Lord Mount-Edgecumbe is recovered. The *Charming man*[1] has actually a tragedy just coming forth at Covent Garden.[2]

I like your account of yourselves, but hope your grandam will not *sit too close*, but let you both have air and exercise enough. *In everything else* I quite agree with her.

Lady Waldegrave and her daughter come to me to-day from the Pavilions, where they have been this week, and will stay till next morning. Good night.

P. S. I fear you have lost your poor friend Mr. Sept. West.

147. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*[3]

[*Aetat* 77]

Strawberry Hill
July 7, 1795

I am not dead of fatigue with my royal visitors, as I expected to be, though I was on my poor lame feet three whole hours. Your daughter,[4] who kindly assisted me in doing the honours, will

[1] Jerningham.
[2] Edward Jerningham's tragedy *The Siege of Berwick* was produced on Dec. 13, 1793.—T.
[3] This was Horace Walpole's last letter to Marshal Conway, who died suddenly at Park Place between four and five o'clock on the morning of July 9, 1795. The cause of his death was an attack of cramp in the stomach, caused (as his daughter, Mrs. Damer, stated in a letter to Miss Berry) by his imprudence in exposing himself to cold and damp.—T.
[4] Mrs Damer.

will tell you the particulars, and how prosperously I succeeded. The Queen was uncommonly condescending and gracious, and deigned to drink my health when I presented her with the last glass, and to thank me for all my attentions. Indeed my memory *de vieille cour* was but once in default. As I had been assured that her Majesty would be attended by her Chamberlain, yet was not, I had no glove ready when I received her at the step of her coach: yet she honoured me with her hand to lead her upstairs; nor did I recollect my omission when I led her down again. Still, though gloveless, I did not squeeze the royal hand, as Vice-Chamberlain Smith did to Queen Mary.

You will have stared, as I did, at the Elector of Hanover deserting his ally the King of Great Britain, and making peace with the monsters. But Mr. Fawkener, whom I saw at my sister's on Sunday, laughs at the article in the newspapers, and says it is not an unknown practice for stock-jobbers to hire an emissary at the rate of five hundred pounds, and dispatch to Franckfort, whence he brings forged attestations of some marvellous political event, and spreads it on 'Change, which produces such a fluctuation in the stocks as amply overpays the expense of his mission.

This was all I learnt in the single night I was in town. I have not read the new French constitution, which seems longer than probably its reign will be. The five sovereigns will, I suppose, be the first guillotined. Adieu!

Yours ever,

O.

You

148. To Miss Mary Berry

[*Aetat* 78]

Wednesday, Nov. 4th, 1795

You commanded me, mighty princess, to write to you, and said I write best when I 'have nothing to say'—no flattery to the moments when I have nothing to relate. However, were the case so, this letter would be perfection! Lord Rochester, indeed, thought nonentity so fruitful a subject that he wrote an ode on *Nothing* (though he generally chose more productive themes), and I think called *Nothing* the elder brother of *Shade*, which I apprehend was false genealogy, for though they might be twins, I should suppose Master *Light* appeared before Master *Shade*, and that the pre-Adamite *Nothing* was only a false conception. I therefore, who am a rigid genealogist, shall attempt to deduce no progeny from a miscarriage; though I could point out a suitable match for that non-apparent heir, *Nothing*, in my own Princess Royal who never was born.[1] I will wait till I see a precedent of unconsummated marriages producing issue.

Thursday 5th

You!—you are no more a judge of what makes a good letter than Dame Piozzi, who writes bad English when she ought to be exactly accurate, but mistakes vulgarisms for synonyms to

[1] An allusion to the second of Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (see *Works* of Lord Orford, vol. iv., pp. 330-3).—T.

My Dear Mm To Lady ——— Jan. [illegible] 1793 Richd Dk Lad Orford by his own hand HWWalpole

You distress me infinitely by shewing my idle Notes about, which I cannot conceive can amuse any body. My Old fashioned Breeding impels me every now & then to reply to the Letters you honour me with writing, but in truth very unwillingly; for I seldom can have anything particular to say; I scarce go out of my own House, and then only to two or three very private Places, where I see nobody that really knows any thing, and what I learn comes from Newspapers, that collect Intelligence from Coffee Houses, consequently, what I neither believe nor report. At Home I see only a few charitable Elders, except about Fourscore Nephews and Nieces of various Ages, who are each brought to me about once a Year, to stare at me as the Methusalah of the Family, and they can only speak of their own Contemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their Dolls, or Bats and Balls. Must not the Result of all This, Madam, make me a very entertaining Correspondent? and can such Letters be worth shewing? or can I have any Spirit when reduced to dictate? Oh, my good Madam, dispense with me from such Task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such Letters being shewn. Pray send me no more such Laurels, which I desire no more than their Leaves when decked with a Scrap of Tinsel, and stuck on Twelfth Cakes that lye on the Shop Boards of Pastry Cooks at Christmas: I shall be quite content with a Sprig of Rosemary thrown after me, when the Parson of the Parish commits my Dust to Dust.* Till then pray, Mm accept the assurance of my sincere Love

O.

* Lad Orford died in the Spring after the date of this Letter & It was the last Letter Lad Orford wrote & the last Leaf is alone written by him There in this Volume will be found the first Letter & the last I Letter he ever wrote HWWalpole Aug 1837

(This Note was written by Miss Berry the Editor of the Letters by Permission of The Hon Mrs Anne Seymour Damer wh immediately bel of Lad Orford as Trustee under Ld Orfds Will HWWalpole)

to elegancies. Hear the oracle Lear—not in Ireland's spurious transcript—

> Nothing can come of Nothing—speak again.

So I will, when I really have anything to say. At present, not finding the inspirer *Nothing* very procreative, I shall only tell you that I have a little gout in my right foot, and though I had ordered the coach for Cliveden last night, I could not go, nor shall to Lady Betty's to-night; though I am easier to-day, and think it will not be a fit, but I shall propose to my Agnes and Co. to come to me. She has been here, and will come, and sends you this enclosed. Adieu!

149. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[*Aetat* 79]

Jan. 15, 1797

My dear Madam,—You distress me infinitely by showing my idle notes, which I cannot conceive can amuse anybody. My old fashioned breeding impels me every now and then to reply to the letters you honour me with writing, but in truth very unwillingly, for I seldom can have anything particular to say; I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows anything, and what I learn comes from newspapers, that collect intelligence from coffee-houses, consequently what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me about once a year, to stare at me as the Methusalem

Methusalem of the family, and they can only speak of their own contemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls. Must not the result of all this, Madam, make me a very entertaining correspondent? And can such letters be worth showing? or can I have any spirit when so old and reduced to dictate?

Oh, my good Madam, dispense with me from such a task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such letters being shown. Pray send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust. Till then, pray, Madam, accept the resignation of your

Ancient servant,

O.[1]

[1] Walpole died six weeks following the date of this letter. It is interesting to note from the original letter that although at the time he was dying he arranged to have it returned to him.

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